

600+ WINES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE PAGE 91

ITALY'S ELEGANT MOUNTAIN WINES PAGE 62

PICNIC IN PROVENCE PAGE 79

WINE ENTHUSIAST®

THE WORLD IN YOUR GLASS

MAY 2015

THE FILM ISSUE

KATE HUDSON on Making Wine in Santa Barbara PAGE 46

DREW BARRYMORE
KYLE MACLACHLAN
and More

10 Best Wine Movies Ever! PAGE 55

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Prepare to marvel the bold, the unexpected, the palate-defying contortions of flavor. That's right folks, Michael David's Freakshow Cabernet Sauvignon is FREAK-ing amazing! But hey, that's just the norm for this quirky carny of winegrowers who've been cultivating their stage-stealing Lodi grapes for nearly a century.

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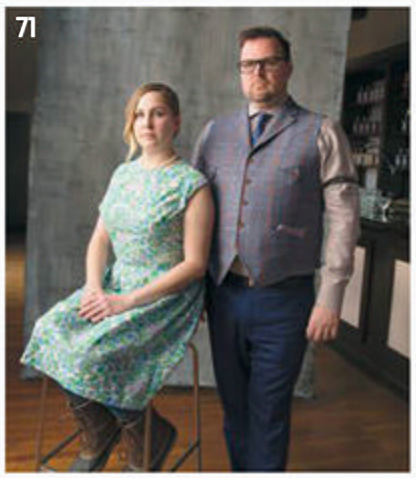
GUIDE TO WINE & FILM

Meet the actors, directors and industry leaders with a foot planted firmly in the vineyard, plus tips on where to go nationwide for the best joint wine and movie experiences, and more.

BY THE EDITORS OF WINE ENTHUSIAST

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BY ALEXIS KORMAN AND ROGER VOSS
Explore the south of France, either literally or through the region's local dishes paired with refreshing wines.

Cover photo by Darren Ankenman



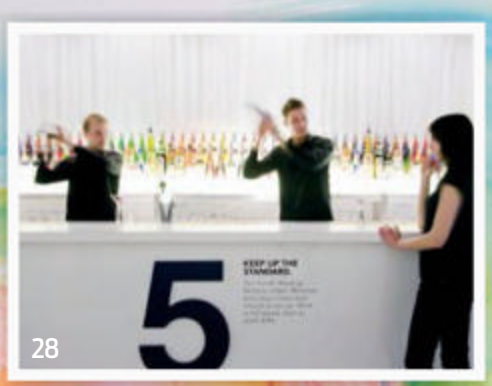
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VOLUME 28, NUMBER 4

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THE REEL WORLD

Film and wine are two of life's greatest pleasures, and both transport us to new destinations in an instant.

There's nothing more transforming than the incredible adventures one experiences on the silver screen. A lifelong cinephile, I've been irreversibly changed by many great scenes in film, and bewitched by movies' ability to whisk me to distant lands, immersing me in the flavor and culture of new places.

Wine contains the same magic. As our *Wine Enthusiast Magazine* tagline says, the world truly is in your glass every time you take a sip. The people, the land, the culture of a place are all part of what unfolds in a taste, and in an instant, you're experiencing a new world and intimately connecting to the heart of that place.

We pay homage to the fascinating connection between vineyard and screen in this issue's Film & Wine coverage (starting on page 45), featuring exclusive interviews with famed actors, directors and film industry luminaries as they discuss their love of wine. We also pair film genres with like-minded wines (film noir and aged Barolo, anyone?), tell you which top-end theaters offer great wine lists, and share which wineries offer film-viewing experiences among the vines.

> The world truly is in your glass every time you take a sip [of wine]. The people, the land, the culture of a place are all part of what unfolds in a taste.

As part of this concept, *Wine Enthusiast* has partnered with five of the leading independent theaters in America for the **Wine & Film Festival** series in April through June—a selection of screenings of the best wine films (including *Somm*, *Sideways* and *A Year in Champagne*, among others). Following the films in these historic theaters will be post-show parties with wines to sample from around the world, chosen by the series' wine partner Palm Bay International. You'll see more information on this incredible collaboration on pages 14–19. Don't miss it!

Also in the issue: European Editor Roger Voss and Contributing Travel Editor Alexis Korman take you on a journey through Provence via its delicious wine and food, Spirits Editor Kara Newman profiles craft distillers of the Southern U.S., and our editors recommend wines for the most sublime moments of spring.



Cheers!

ADAM STRUM
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

COMING NEXT MONTH



America's Unforgettable Wine Drives
Fill the car with friends, pack a corkscrew and hit the road on five of our favorite U.S. wine trips, through California, Oregon, New Mexico, Texas and Virginia.

Pairing the Catch of the Day
How to buy and prepare fresh seafood—and what drinks to pair with it. Learn how to shuck an oyster and prepare the perfect lobster, then pair them with the ideal wines—from Assyrtiko to Txakoli.

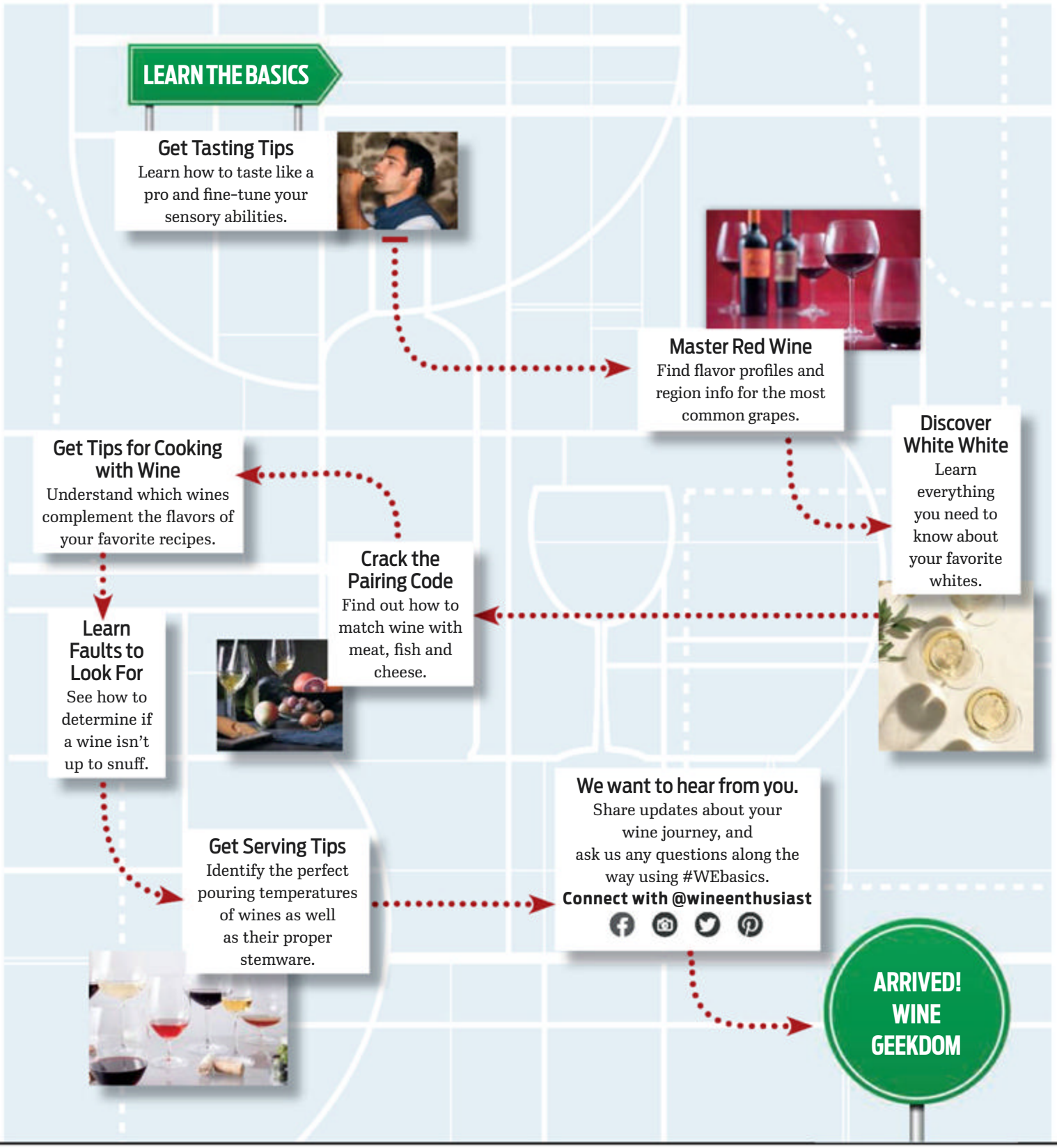
The Best of Catalonia
Look behind the scenes at this Spanish region's key denominations of Priorat, Montsant, Terra Alta, Penedés and Empordá-Costa Brava. What makes the wines from these areas so distinctive?

Napa's Not-So-Hidden Secret
The Stags Leap District AVA celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Here's a detailed look at which icons are still rocking it, and who's giving them a run for their money.


Crazy can come
by the Barrel
That's right. Around here, fun is measured by the gallon, wild nights fill the calendar, good times loaded by the crateful and an obsession with quality wine spans the map. Yeah, wine is a bit all consuming in Lodi.
What can we say, we're
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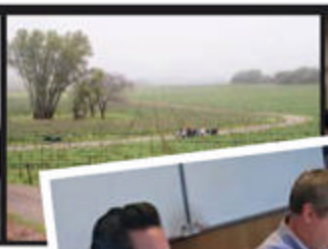
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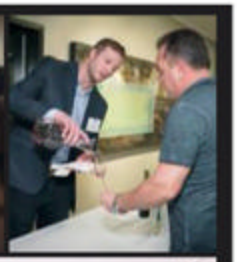
Kick-start your exploration of wine with the help of our expert team of writers and tasters. *WineMag*'s basics section will help you learn your palate and launch your journey.




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2015 PREMIERE NAPA VALLEY WEEK, ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA
Napa Valley Vintners hosted its 19th annual barrel tasting and auction, setting a new record of $6 million in fund-raising for the nonprofit this year. The wine-focused week leading up to the big day featured educational events and professional tastings, like the Symposium for Professional Wine Writers and the Sommelier Napa Valley dinner.



Will Lyons of *The Wall Street Journal* and *Wine Enthusiast* Managing Editor Joe Czerwinski led a session on writing tasting notes.





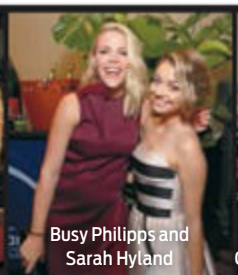





Author Jancis Robinson, MW, right, and Annie Chen.

2015 ACADEMY AWARDS, LOS ANGELES
Piper-Heidsieck, the exclusive Champagne of the Academy Awards, poured its Cuvée Brut at the 87th Oscars, from the telecast award ceremony to the 1940s jazz club-inspired Governors Ball afterparty at the Dolby Theatre.



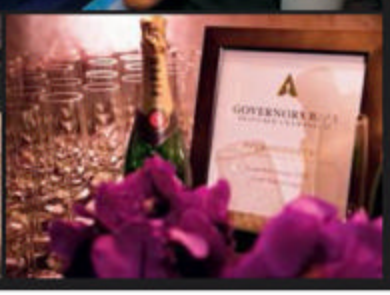
Chef Wolfgang Puck and Cécile Bonnefond, CEO of Piper-Heidsieck

Busy Philipps and Sarah Hyland

Queen Latifah


Josh Hutcherson



Christina Applegate



BOB MCCLENAHAN FOR NAPA VALLEY VINTNERS; JESSE GRANT/GETTY IMAGES

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In conjunction with its first-ever Wine & Film Issue, Wine Enthusiast is pleased to present a series of exclusive screenings of the world's most celebrated wine movies, old and new.

We invite you to pop a cork onscreen and off in America's most prestigious and innovative art film houses, coast to coast. Private parties after the shows will feature some of the world's most delicious wines, and access to wine experts one-on-one.

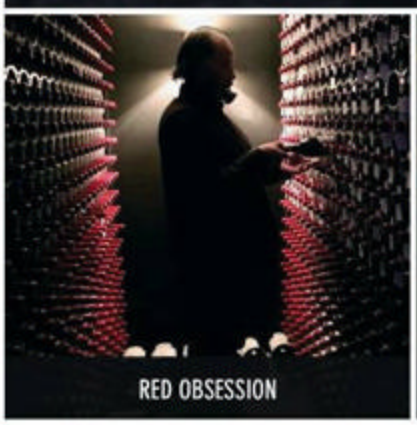

A YEAR IN CHAMPAGNE


SOMM


AN AUTUMN TALE


SIDEWAYS


BAROLO BOYS


RED OBSESSION


BOTTLE SHOCK


CORKED


YOU WILL BE MY SON

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APRIL 27	Somm
MAY 6	You Will Be My Son
MAY 13	A Year in Champagne
MAY 20	Red Obession
MAY 27	Sideways



JOSEPH BURNS FILM CENTER

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PLEASANTVILLE, NY
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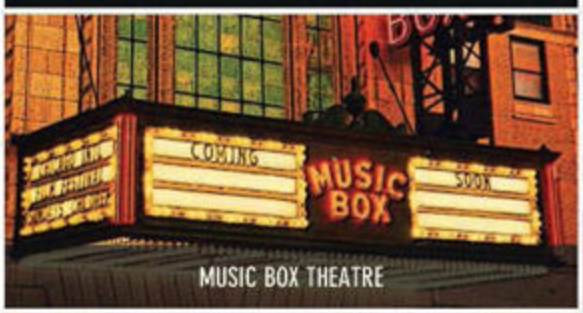
MAY 7	Somm
MAY 13	Barolo Boys
MAY 20	You Will Be My Son
MAY 27	A Year in Champagne


CALIFORNIA FILM INSTITUE

CALIFORNIA FILM INSTITUE
SAN RAFAEL, CA
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MAY 7	Bottleshock
MAY 14	Somm Sommelier, Geoff Kruth will join for post screening discussion
MAY 21	A Year in Champagne
MAY 28	Corked Filmmakers Ross Clenenden & Paul Hawley and actor Jeffrey Weissman will join for post screening discussion

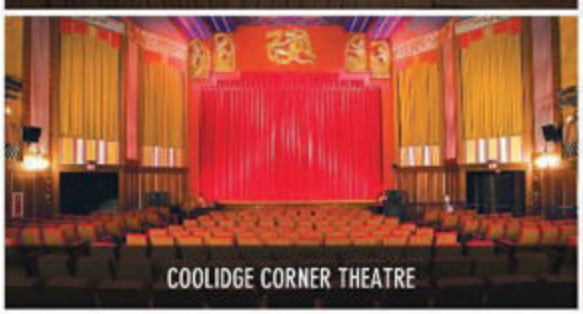


MUSIC BOX THEATRE

MUSIC BOX THEATRE
CHICAGO, IL
TIME: 7:30 PM

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APRIL 8	Sideways
APRIL 15	You Will Be My Son
APRIL 22	A Year in Champagne
APRIL 29	Somm


COOLIDGE CORNER THEATRE

COOLIDGE CORNER THEATRE
BROOKLINE, MA
TIME: 7:00 PM

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MAY 21	Somm
MAY 28	Sideways
JUNE 4	A Year in Champagne
JUNE 11	Autumn Tale

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ALL ATTENDEES WILL ENJOY A POST-SCREENING WINE TASTING

CINZANO



At the heart of the world's favorite spirited beverages you will find Cinzano, recognized by its signature blue and red label and 250-year tradition of excellence.

With classic appeal and versatile brands, Cinzano's legacy is sure to continue for generations to come. In 1757, CINZANO's two brothers, Giovanni Giacomo and Carolo Stefano Cinzano, Master Distillers, opened a small shop in Turin where a dream soon became a reality.

As their traditional Vermouth production rapidly increased, so did their reputation for quality. The Savoy monarchs beckoned the brothers' expertise to create a sparkling wine to emulate the popular French Champagne of the early 19th century. The result was the birth of Cinzano Sparkling Wines in 1850. The Cinzano range of sparkling wines includes both sweet and dry versions, each with their own unique characteristics.

Alta Luna



Produced in Northern Italy's Dolomiti IGT from select hillside vineyard sites, Alta Luna offers a quartet of wines that appeal to a wide range of consumer preferences.

Alta Luna enters the premium segment of quality-driven wines, reflecting a strong sense of place and style. Alta Luna, meaning High Moon, presents itself in a sleek and modern package, featuring a die-cut depiction of the Dolomite Alps.

The Alta Luna vineyards are situated in the hills and along the foothills of the Adige Valley, bordering Trentino and Alto Adige, in the town of Roverè delle Luna. Only select sites from high-altitude vineyards with ideal aspects are used. The unique glacial-alluvial soils, which are rich in texture and well-drained are just the beginning. The climate in this region makes all the difference. Northern Trentino enjoys classically warm temperatures in the summer, helping in the development of ripe concentrated fruit and elegant aromatics, while the cool evenings maintain the fruit's acidity, resulting in wines that are refreshing, very well balanced, and particularly aromatic.

FERRARI
TRENTO 1902



Ferrari was born over a century ago in 1902 through the efforts of Giulio Ferrari.

After his studies in France, Ferrari returned to Trentino, Italy and planted Chardonnay, which no one had done before. Ferrari was convinced that through the combination of Trentino terroir, the innovative use of Chardonnay and the use of the traditional "metodo classico," he could make world-class sparkling wines. By 1906, the awards started to roll in and Ferrari was well on its way to producing what would shortly become the most famous sparkling wine in all of Italy.

In 1952, Giulio Ferrari, not having any children, chose Bruno Lunelli, a friend and local merchant, as successor for his beloved business. Today the third generation of the Lunelli family is at the helm and the winery could not be in better hands as it continues to be a perennial Tre Bicchieri winner.

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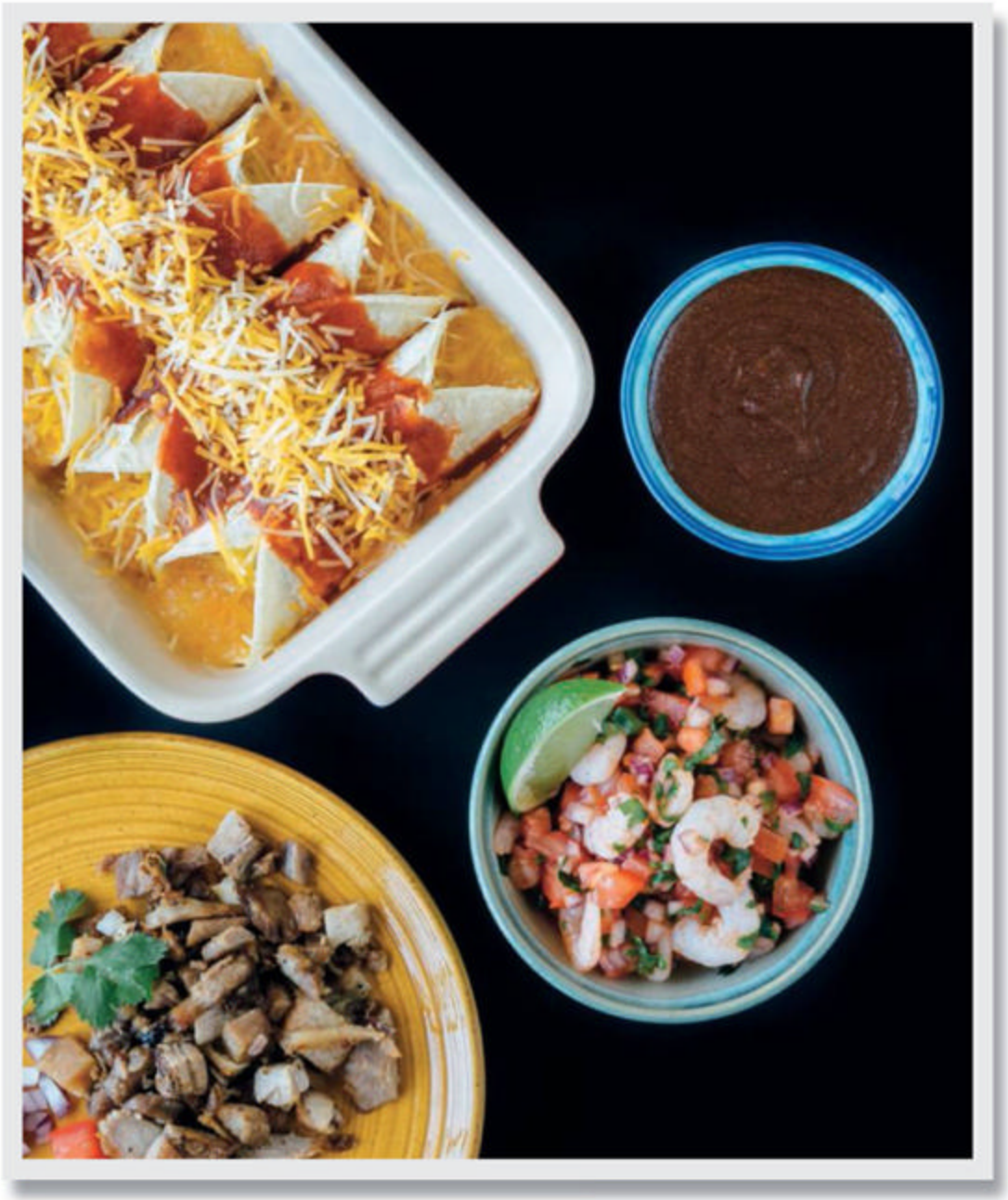
CINCO DE VINO

Celebrate Mexico's 1862 victory over France (*psst*: It's not Mexico's Independence Day), by beating back the tyrannical tradition of only drinking beer with your burritos and *carnitas*. Real south-of-the-border fare, with its heartiness, heat and rich flavors, is ripe for wine exploration. It's time to pass the hot sauce, pop the cork and take your palate to new plateaus. >>

MEG BAGGOTT

TACO BELLA

Culturally, *Cinco de Mayo* is met, at best, with a ho-hum shrug in Mexico, but here in the U.S., it's the perfect time to discover the vast wine-pairing potential of our neighbor's often-complex comfort cuisine. Here are five traditional dishes and the wines to match.



Mole Poblano: The dark-berry fruit, gentle spice and smoky finish of a Zinfandel or Primitivo echoes the prune-like dried chilies and gently charred flavors of this complex, chocolate-chili sauce.

Shrimp Ceviche: A dry (*trocken*) Mosel Riesling has zippy acidity to stand up to the citrus, and its relatively low alcohol level doesn't accentuate the spicy heat. Serve it close to ice-cold to further refresh the palate.

Enchiladas Rojas: Not all Mexican chili sauces bring power and heat. This mellow, earthy red sauce will nuzzle up nicely with a silky, fruit-forward California Pinot Noir.

Costillas en Salsa Verde: This classic pork-rib dish calls for a crisp New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, since both the wine and the tomatillo salsa often share a distinct gooseberry note.

Tacos Campechanos: The multilayered flavors of these steak-and-chorizo tacos—earthy and meaty, garnished with onion, cilantro, salsa and lime—call for sheer refreshment, not competition. Best bet: Pop a chilled bottle of your favorite sparkling rosé. —*Nils Bernstein*

MIKE VALDEZ/IMAGE BRIEF; BETH GALTON; FOOD STYLING: MARIANA VELASQUEZ



PIPIÁN VERDE

This traditional pepita sauce from San Francisco's Nopalito has many hallmarks of great Mexican food—herbs, spice, nuttiness, creaminess—and can be served with your choice of protein. Pair it with a chilled Vouvray sec.

- ½ cup toasted pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- ¼ white onion
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 2 Serrano chilies, stemmed and seeded
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh epazote (found in Mexican groceries)
- ½ cup fresh cilantro
- 1½ cups spinach, chard or a combination
- 2 scallions
- ½ corn tortilla, toasted in a dry skillet until crisp
- 2½ cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons oil
- Salt, to taste

Put all ingredients except oil and salt in blender, and purée until smooth.

Heat oil in a large deep skillet over medium-high heat, then add sauce (beware of the splatter) and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes, or until sauce is a bit thicker than heavy cream. Salt generously to taste.

Purée sauce again until smooth. Serve immediately with seafood, chicken or pork.

VINS & NEEDLE

When the Coravin 1000 Wine Access System was introduced in 2013, it was touted as the biggest game-changer in wine since the Leverpull corkscrew.

After all, this sleek contraption allows you to taste your cellar prizes without opening them or allowing a speck of air into the bottle.

Then, sadly, a few bottles broke during use (only one injury was reported).

While many wine pros say inexperience was the likely culprit for the busted bottles, Coravin recalled the device, added tweaks and reissued it. A protective sleeve to place around the bottle while in use now accompanies the Coravin. The company also ramped up its education program.

Since returning to the marketplace, the Coravin has picked up where it left off. It continues to transform wine-by-the-glass programs, while delighting sommeliers and cellar owners alike.

HOW IT WORKS:
The Coravin 1000 drives a tiny, surgical-grade needle through the cork and pulls out the wine. Argon gas, which is safe and tasteless, is pumped into the bottle, ensuring that no oxygen enters. The cork reseals itself when the needle is removed, and the bottle can be placed back on the rack. $300, *wineenthusiast.com*.

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KÖLSCH CRUSH

Meet Your Favorite Warm-Weather Beer

In a less-enlightened era of beer consumption, warm weather meant light, watery lagers. Sure, they could refresh, but they left the palate wanting.

Now, thanks to a vast sea of kölsch imports from Germany, along with domestic takes on the style, you no longer have to sacrifice taste for thirst-quenching power. Low in alcohol, but big in flavor, it was literally first brewed for drinking alfresco on warm, sun-dappled days.

This Cologne-born brew earns its status as a superlative warm-season beer by blurring the line between wintertime ales and the lagers of summer.

Kölsch starts as an ale, but is finished like a lager. It's first fermented at warm temperatures with ale yeasts, which impart a fruity aroma. It then conditions in cool temperatures like a lager, creating a refreshing crispness.

"Kölsch embodies the perfect balance of light maltiness, delicate floral hops and crisp subtle fruit," says Brock Wagner, founder of Saint Arnold Brewing Company, which makes the kölsch-style Fancy Lawnmower. "It's a refreshing beer that has a deceptive amount of complexity."

Given its agreeable nature, kölsch is versatile when it comes to pairing with food. It excels with light fare like salads, ceviches, shellfish and salmon, as well as sausages, grilled chicken and cheeses, like Brie and Camembert.

—Joshua M. Bernstein



5 KÖLSCH-STYLE BEERS TO CRACK THIS SPRING

Freigeist Ottekolong

High on flavor and humor, Germany's complex Ottekolong ("Eau de Cologne") is a traditional take on kölsch, with extra hops and no filtration.

Reissdorf Kölsch

Founded in 1894, Cologne's Reissdorf specializes in this exceptionally refined, daintily floral kölsch. It's a standard-bearer.

Mother Earth Brewing Endless River

This golden looker from North Carolina goes down nice and crisp, with a grassy bouquet and a subtly fruity taste. It's sensational with seafood.

Schlafly Kölsch

Lightly fruity and cracker-crisp, this Saint Louis-crafted refresher is made using a yeast strain purchased from Gaffel, a top Cologne kölsch brewery.

Captain Lawrence Captain's Kölsch

Brewed just north of New York City, this clean-drinking, uber-crisp kölsch might be a hamburger's best friend. You'll love the bright, lemony aroma and refreshing acidity.

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AMSTERDAM

The Lobby

The Dutch capital delivers on all fronts: Old World charm, a party culture and a progressive, vibrant food-and-drink scene.



DINE

The Dutch are rightly proud of their cheese. Taste the city's best at **De Kaaskamer** on Runstraat (try the aged Gouda). ✦ Prepare to stand in line for the pizza at the colorful **La Perla** on Tweede Tuindwarsstraat, heavily patronized by hungry locals. Amsterdam's preferred on-the-go snacks are croquets, called *kroketten*, and *bitterballen*, breaded, deep-fried morsels of veal ragout. They're so popular that they're sold in vending machines. ✦ For gourmet bitterballen, as well as fine modern Dutch cuisine, head to smart eatery **Screaming Beans** on Eerste Constantijn Huygensstraat. ✦ For an old-school Amsterdam experience, sink into an old Chesterfield sofa and watch the world go by over a glass of wine and *flammkuchen* (tarte flambée) at **The Lobby** on Nes.



De Kaaskamer



Screaming Beans



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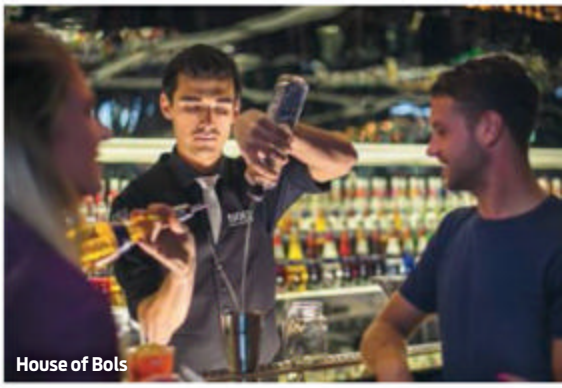
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The Bols aroma bar at the House of Bols Cocktail & Genever Experience



House of Bols





Bubbles & Wines



DRINK

✦ Sniff your way through the entire range of Bols liqueurs, from apricot to yogurt, then have a custom-made cocktail on Paulus Potterstraat at the **House of Bols Cocktail & Genever Experience**, which has crafted liqueurs in Amsterdam since 1575. ✦ Buy your own earthenware bottle of genever, the granddaddy of gin, at **Quinta Wijnen** on Nieuwe Leliestraat. Devotees of "the green fairy" can buy absinthe here, as well. ✦ Choose from dozens of wines by the glass in the modern, cozy wine bar **Vyne** on Prinsengracht. ✦ Indulge in all-out luxury at chichi **Bubbles & Wines** on Nes, where you can pair a flight of fine fizz with caviar. ✦ And no trip to Amsterdam would be complete without a coffee by the canal at picturesque café **t'Smalle** on Egelantiersgracht, an old, charming inn on one of the city's most stunning waterways. —*Anne Krebiehl*



Quinta Wijnen




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COOL WHIPPED

The gorgeously airy and wine-friendly semifreddo has gone gourmet (just don't call it ice cream).

Each Thanksgiving, Sara Ayyash's mother mashed ripe bananas and mixed them with canned cranberry sauce, diced apples and sugar. Then, she would fold it all into Cool Whip and set the concoction in the freezer.

"We ate those frozen cubes after our turkey dinner," says Ayyash, pastry chef of Lemaire, at The Jefferson Hotel in Richmond, Virginia. "This is a semifreddo in its simplest form."

If you've never had it, semifreddo is like a fluffier, creamier version of ice cream. And the sweet stuff is starting to top some of the best dessert menus around the country, as diners discover its rich, soft character that often goes well with after-dinner wines.

Ayyash now incorporates peanut butter semifreddo into her decidedly more sophisticated (despite the name) Snickers Bar, a mélange of flourless cake, nougat and caramel peanuts dipped in dark chocolate ganache.

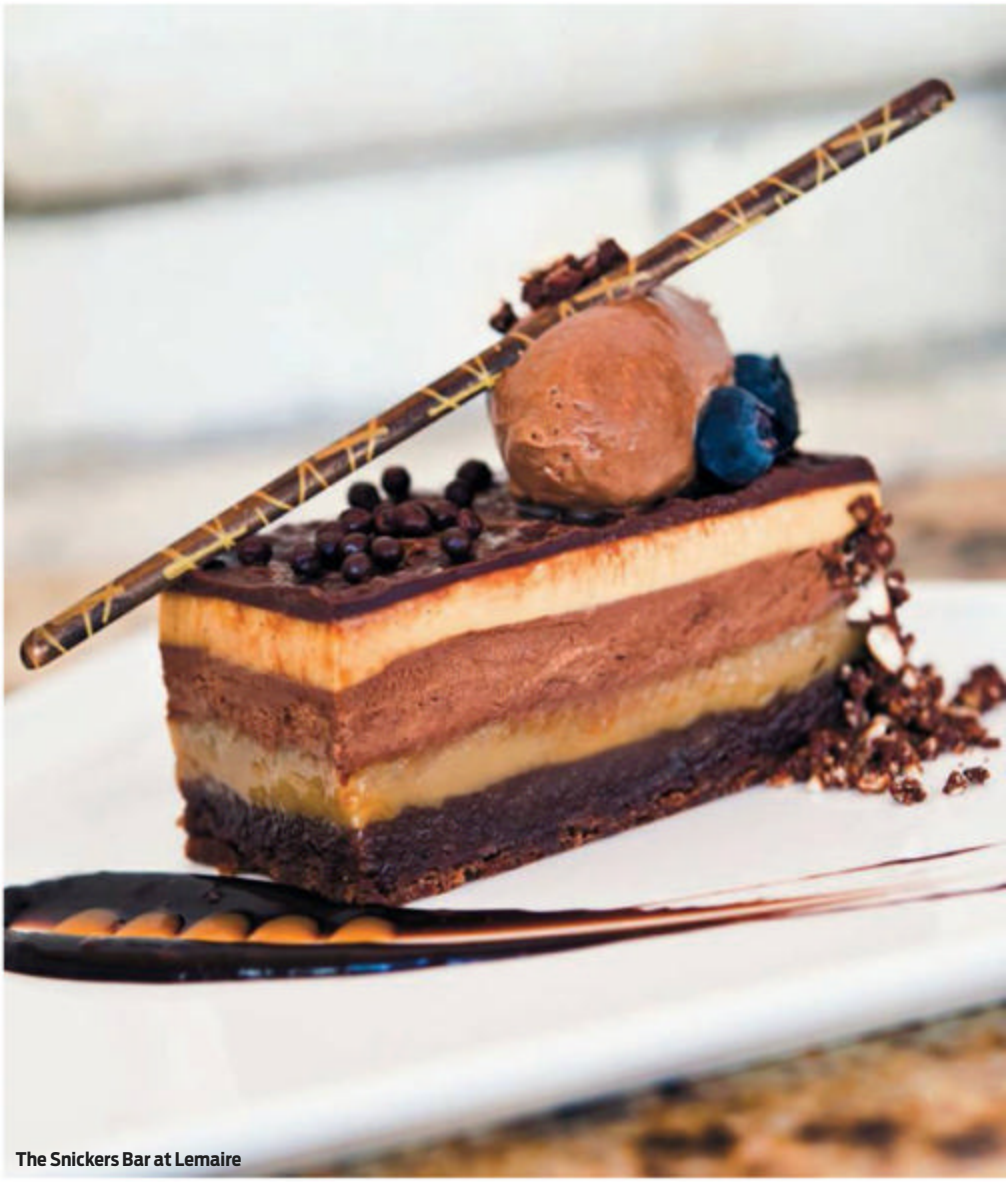
"For me, semifreddo is just a deconstructed ice cream, where all the ingredients are whipped as much as possible, flavored and carefully folded back together so they don't deflate," she says. "The mixture is then set in the freezer to harden. When made correctly, it should be fluffy."

Despite its easy-melting nature, cool, creamy semifreddo flaunts an alluring texture. Chefs love making it for guests, especially since it's easy to prep and serve fresh.

Cliff Crooks, executive chef at The Wayfarer in New York City, finds semifreddo's ice cream-meets-pudding appeal, "a double treat. It leads to ease in recipes." He's experimenting with a yogurt version that's charged with verbena and strawberry.

At Moroccan eatery Aziza in San Francisco, diners recently ended the night with Pastry Chef Melissa Chou's burnt vanilla semifreddo, served with grapefruit sorbet, cassis and pickled roses.

"The contrast is a bit surprising because the sorbet ends up being the denser part, but it's also a bit of a cleanser to the fattiness of the cream and egg," she says. "When we think of frozen dessert, we always go to ice cream. And while it isn't as cold feeling, it's mousse-ier, so you get the same richness in something that is just so amazingly light." —*Alia Akkam*



The Snickers Bar at Lemaire



Aziza



The Wayfarer

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TOAST SPRING ETERNAL

SPRING FLINGS

Make memories by pairing the right bottle with the season's most sublime moments.



THE MOMENT: Opening Day at the Farmers' Market
THE BOTTLE: Sidebar 2014 Rosé (Russian River Valley), $25
Grab some strawberries, peaches and nectarines. Such prizes should inspire a wine equal in divine freshness, like this rosé made from 100-percent Syrah. Not a *saignée*, the dry, succulent quaffer offers as much crisp, juicy flavor as your fruit, and is enlivened by acidity as refreshing as lemonade.

THE MOMENT: First Day at the Beach
THE BOTTLE: Zocker 2013 Paragon Vineyard Grüner Veltliner (Edna Valley), $20
When you emerge with sea salt in your mouth and sand in your hair, reach for something easy to crack and as refreshing as a lager. A chilled Zocker's twist-top Grüner Veltliner does the trick. Fire up the hibachi, toss on a foil pack of mussels and clams, and relish in the sea spray while savoring the shellfish between sips of this passion fruit-inflected Grüner. It certainly beats sipping cold white wine on some Alpine ski slope.

THE MOMENT: The Memorial Day Barbecue
THE BOTTLE: J. Christopher 2012 Unfiltered Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley), $29
Celebrate summer with something versatile enough to glug down with whatever's on the grill, be it hot dogs, burgers, chicken or ribs. This lush Oregon Pinot Noir from a stellar vintage is generously endowed with blueberry and black cherry fruit, streaked with cola, coffee and cream. Big enough for rich, spicy meats, yet smooth enough for lighter fare. Serve it chilled on a hot day, or at cellar temp when it's mild. Buy an extra bottle or two—you and your guests will be braying for more as the sun fades and the fireworks start.

THE MOMENT: After Your First Lawnmower Session
THE BOTTLE: Framingham 2012 Classic Riesling (Marlborough), $25
Check the oil in the mower, gas it up and make the clippings fly. Take in that small-engine exhaust and fresh-cut grass aroma, mingled with your own sweat. Work up a thirst then quench it with this pristine off-dry wine from one of Marlborough's top Riesling producers. The tension between the wine's modest sweetness and bright acids will bring your sore muscles back to life, while the aromas of spring flowers blended with apple, peach and lime make it a seasonal splendor in a glass.

THE MOMENT: May the Fourth (*Star Wars Day*)
THE BOTTLE: New England Brewing Co. Imperial Stout Trooper, $8
Don't anger the Wookiee by drinking just anything on this unofficial yet incredibly special holiday. Turn to the dark side while watching the original and prequel trilogies—in episode order, of course—with this perfectly befitting, full-bodied imperial stout. The force is definitely strong with this one—at 8.5% abv—so if you overindulge, the Revenge of the Fifth could prove fierce. Beyond its strength, it boasts delicious and rich notes of charred malt, cocoa nib and roasted coffee bean that are as dark and complex as Darth Vader. May the Fourth be with you, young Padawan.

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IN THE CLEAR

These new, small-batch bottlings boldly debunk the notion that all vodkas taste pretty much the same.



Not long ago, I sat with five glasses of vodka in front of me. They all looked the same—five glasses of perfectly clear liquid. I couldn't help but roll my eyes.

This is going to be a snoozer.

But I was wrong. By the end, I was in love with—and actually excited about—vodka again.

If you think vodka is like, *sooo* boring, guess what: These aren't.

Vodka has become ripe for experimentation. For decades, it was all about pure neutrality, distilled multiple times and filtered through anything until all character was gone, making it—despite all the marketing—really hard to tell them apart.

But now, distillers are working with interesting, high-quality ingredients—and they're not processing the life out of them. Rather, they're ensuring subtle flavors and even unique textures shine through.

Bartenders like vodka because it can work in a wide range of cocktails. And after a long stint in which snooty mixologists looked down their handlebar mustaches at it, independent thinkers are bringing vodka back to bars, one small-batch bottle at a time.

"Vodka has a lot of flavor, if you're tasting for it," says Pamela Wiznitzer, bartender and creative director at New York City's Seamstress, which opened in February. "It's about the base—it changes the game—and the quality level. Vodka can be dynamic."

This latest generation of vodka has nuance, subtle complexity and, dare we say, *soul*. —*Kara Newman*

THE NEW VODKAS TO TRY

The official definition of straight vodka is a distilled spirit that's colorless, odorless and flavorless. These prove that it doesn't have to be characterless, too.

1. AMERICAN HARVEST ORGANIC SPIRIT ($24)
Origin: Idaho
Made from: Winter wheat
One sip, and it surprises with notes of melon, almond and vanilla, and a mild creaminess typical of wheated vodkas.

2. AO VODKA ($50)
Origin: Japan
Made from: Rice
This is crisp, citrusy and so silky that it needs little adornment beyond a simple ribbon of cucumber.

3. KARLSSON'S GOLD VODKA ($33)
Origin: Sweden
Made from: Virgin potatoes
Karlsson's Gold is distilled once and left unfiltered, creating an unmistakably earthy, funky succulence. Its robustness will ratchet up your Bloody Marys.

4. ST. AUGUSTINE DISTILLERY CO. FLORIDA CANE VODKA ($28)
Origin: Florida
Made from: Sugarcane
It has the sweetness of superlight white rum, making it a slam dunk for any cocktail that evokes the classic mojito.

5. SNOW LEOPARD VODKA ($35)
Origin: Poland
Made from: Spelt
This grain-forward vodka offers soft vanilla notes, finishing crisp, clean and light. Bonus: 15 percent of profits help fund snow leopard conservation projects.

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SO FRESH, SO CLEAN

Your juicer isn't just for that kale-based breakfast drink. Liquefying just-plucked produce can enliven your cocktails, too. Spirits Editor **Kara Newman** chooses four (kale-free) favorites for spring.



SURFBOARD FIZZ

THE STYLE: Mildly sweet and super refreshing

THE JUICE: Watermelon

- **2 ounces gin**
- **¼ cup of cubed watermelon, juiced**
- **¾ ounce fresh-squeezed lemon juice**
- **½ ounce orgeat (almond) syrup**
- **¼ ounce honey**
- **Club soda**
- **2 basil leaves, for garnish**

In a cocktail shaker, combine the first 5 ingredients with ice. Shake well and strain into a Collins glass over 5 ice cubes. Top with soda and garnish with basil leaves. *Serves 1.*

THE BLOODY BEET

THE STYLE: Earthy and rich, with pleasing heat

THE JUICE: Beet, tomato, celery, ginger

- **1½ ounces vodka**
- **2 small beets, juiced**
- **1½ medium tomatoes, juiced**
- **1½ medium celery stalks, juiced**
- **1 ¼- to ½-inch piece of ginger, juiced**
- **1½ teaspoons fresh-squeezed lime juice**
- **Dash of hot sauce**
- **Fresh horseradish, to taste**
- **Lemon wedge, for garnish**

In a Collins glass, stir together all ingredients with ice. Garnish with the lemon and serve with a straw. *Serves 1.*

THE DEVIL IN OAXACA

THE STYLE: Smoky, with a becoming citrus bite

THE JUICE: Carrot

- **¼ cup rim salt**
- **1 lime wedge**
- **2 ounces joven mezcal**
- **1 medium carrot, juiced**
- **½ ounce Cointreau**
- **½ ounce agave nectar**
- **1 tablespoon fresh-squeezed lemon juice**
- **Dash of orange bitters**
- **Cilantro sprigs, for garnish**

Pour salt into a shallow dish or plate. Moisten the rim of a rocks glass with a lime wedge and gently roll the edge of the glass rim in the salt to coat. Set glass aside.

In a cocktail shaker, combine all ingredients except cilantro with ice. Shake well and strain into prepared glass over fresh ice. Garnish with cilantro. *Serves 1.*

THE YELLOW LIGHT

THE STYLE: Sweet and spicy

THE JUICE: Bell pepper, pineapple

- ¾ **cup blanco Tequila**
- 1 **jalapeño, cored**
- 1 **medium pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into 1-inch strips**
- 2 **yellow bell peppers, cored and cut into strips**
- 2 **ounces fresh-squeezed lime juice**
- 4 **pineapple leaves, for garnish**

Pour Tequila over the jalapeño and let steep for 30 minutes, then discard pepper.

Juice the pineapple and yellow peppers and run pulp through a second time (there's still juice left in there) to yield about 1½ cups of juice.

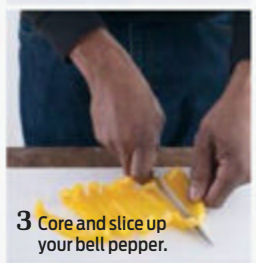
In a large cocktail shaker, combine the pepper and pineapple juice with the Tequila, lime juice and ice. Shake well and strain into 4 Collins glasses over fresh ice. Garnish each glass with a pineapple leaf. *Serves 4.*



1 Start with the freshest fruit you can find.



2 Steep a cored jalapeño in the Tequila for 30 minutes, then discard pepper.



3 Core and slice up your bell pepper.



4 Then peel and core your pineapple.



5 Juice the pineapple and bell pepper, squeeze your lime juice and prepare the Tequila.



6 Shake liquids with ice, pour over fresh ice and garnish with pepper.

MEG BAGGOTT: FOOD STYLING. ANTHONY WILSON





VINEYARD VÉRITÉ

7 Questions for Wil Fernandez, executive producer and director of the documentary *Vintage 2014: The Stories Behind The Vines*







Wil Fernandez

How long did you film?
There were about 150 days of production, charting the actual fruit and winemakers basically from bud break to when it goes into the barrel.

Why did you choose Santa Barbara County vineyards and wineries?
I just fell in love with the area and got to know the people there. Plus, the wineries and vineyards like Riverbench, Larner, Foxen and Buttonwood have the story I want to tell: They're mostly smaller producers who have amazing talent and really believe in the region and its wine.

Why focus on small producers?
Because of the economy of scale, bottles from smaller producers are usually higher priced. So I really wanted to create an appreciation for why that is and what goes into that. Most people don't realize at the wine store, that when they're buying a bottle that's $40 instead of $15, more often than not, they're actually helping the little guy out.

So your film sort of serves as an awareness campaign, too?
Absolutely. I used to work in advertising and developed a basic questionnaire about wine buying habits. I noticed people who had actually visited a vineyard were almost always willing to spend more on a bottle. So, that's actually when I got the idea for the film. I could bring the vineyard to the wine drinker no matter where they were and help smaller guys everywhere.

You serve wine during screenings, yes?
Yeah. I wanted to create a virtual vineyard visit, make it as close to the real experience as possible. So the film is shown in three sections, and in between each part, we actually pour some of the wines and have one of the winemakers tell people about it.

Like the smaller producers you profile, your budget was tiny and began with Kickstarter. How excited were you when you made your funding goal?
Oh, man, at one point I didn't think the movie was going to happen. I had asked for $20,000. But after several weeks, there was only like $7,000. And that $7,000 came in the first week. Then literally during the last 48 hours it just spiked. We ended up with $25,000.

> When you're buying a bottle that's $40 instead of $15, you're more than likely helping the little guy out.

Did that help fund your drone that captured those gorgeous shots over the vineyard?
Ha. Yeah. I had to buy a couple of drones. I crashed so many. That's an expensive mistake. Trust me.
—Mike Dawson

GRAFFIGNA MALBEC & ARGENTINE ASADO: THE PERFECT PAIR

Argentine Malbec and steak is a well-known match, but the fruit freshness and bold flavors of **Graffigna Centenario Malbec** takes the pairing of a juicy steak cooked "gaucho" style and red wine to another level.

The "Asado" is a typical Argentine ritual that brings people together - where large cuts of beef, seasoned only with salt, are slowly grilled over a smoky charcoal barbecue while guests wait patiently and socialize over a glass of Malbec.

So host an asado and enjoy a true Argentine experience for yourself. And remember: **never have an asado without a glass of Malbec!**





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WINE, SOUTHERN STYLE

Many American lists are light on wines from the Southern Hemisphere. But these restaurants give bottles from the bottom half of the globe their due respect.


Public, New York City

French, Italian and domestic wines are still the A-listers of the U.S. restaurant scene. The fancy places with award-winning wine menus are headlined by verticals of grand cru Burgundies, super Tuscans and consultant-crafted Cabernets.

Sure, burgeoning demand and good business sense may mean an occasional New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc or Argentine Malbec may squeak onto a list. Maybe there's a vintage of Almaviva, placed by virtue of its connection to Château Mouton Rothschild. Or a trophy stash of Penfolds Grange. But for the most part, good selections of Southern Hemisphere wines are few and far between.

> For the most part, good selections of Southern Hemisphere wines are few and far between.

At New York City's **The Musket Room**, at least diners can find a bountiful, well-chosen selection of New Zealand wines. Matt Lambert, the chef and owner, is a New Zealander by birth, and the entire beverage list—put together by Cameron Douglas, MS and served by Sommelier Dane Campbell—reflects his heritage. New Zealand wines dominate the list from sparklers to stickies, and even Kiwi beers figure prominently.

Just down Elizabeth Street, **Public** takes a slightly broader view of the wine world, but the focus remains on Australasia. Beverage Director Jesse Webster's list includes gems like aged Grosset Riesling and Dry River Pinot Noir, but also bottles from up-and-coming producers, like Jamsheed and Luke Lambert.

More firmly Australian and more concise are the lists at **Burke & Wills** and **Flinders Lane**, both also in New York City. They still have much to offer, from Dexter Mornington Peninsula Chardonnay at B&W to Bindi Macedon Ranges Pinot Noir at Flinders.

New York City is also home to most of the top South African wine lists in the U.S. **Xai Xai** and **Braai**, under the same ownership on a block of West 51st Street, have wide-ranging selections. **Madiba** in Brooklyn (and the new **Madiba Harlem**) have smaller, well-selected lists. But the granddaddy of all South African lists is the selection at **Jiko**, located in Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge in Orlando.

For South American bottlings, **Buenos Aires Restaurant** in New York City boasts a wide array of Argentine wines. Owner Ismael Alba is originally from his restaurant's namesake, and his wine list reflects that. **Columbia Restaurant**, with seven locations in Florida, claims to be the oldest restaurant in the state. Much of the list is Spanish, but it still includes a healthy dose of Chilean and Argentine wines.

Although the absolute best way to experience these wines is in their countries of origin, next time your schedule doesn't permit a quick trip to the other side of the globe, now you know where to go.



Managing Editor Joe Czerwinski has been a fan of wines from the Southern Hemisphere since a 1994 Stonyridge Larose from New Zealand's Waiheke Island captured his heart as a ringer in a blind-tasting of California Cabernets.



A NEW LOOK AT THE MODERN

Master Sommelier Michaël Engelmann is the Alsace-born wine director at **The Modern**, one of New York City's bastions of American-French cuisine. Since joining the restaurant in July 2014, he's expanded the number of Australian red wines on his list from four to 60 and consistently promotes Southern Hemisphere wines by the glass. "I learned a ton about Australian wine while at Rockpool [in Sydney]," he says. "And the reception here has been great, from the staff and from the customers."

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The Wine Enthusiast

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WINE & FILM



AARON GRAUBART

Whether producing a wine or a film, both require a visionary leader, creativity, technical know-how and a boatload of money. Commercial success often depends on critics, and a new release is punctuated with some well-deserved partying. But the most profound link between the two art forms is how one sip or a single scene can whisk your senses away to a wholly different time and place. That's powerful stuff. Welcome to our celebration of one of life's greatest pairings.

Kate Hudson

ACTRESS, *ALMOST FAMOUS*, *HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS*, *THE SKELETON KEY*; CO-OWNER OF HUDSON BELLAMY WINES



DARREN ANKENMAN; MARK DOWNEY/MASTERFILE

How did you get into wine?

It's just something we grew up with. My parents were always, well, wine enthusiasts, and they took us on wine trips. I went to Burgundy when I was 14 and Bordeaux when I was 16.

Kurt Russell, my stepdad, started making wine a few years back up in the Santa Rita Hills, and he kept telling me and Matt [Bellamy, co-owner of Hudson Bellamy Wines] that we had to get up and blend with them and do a harvest. We ended slogging up there, and that was it. It was too much fun. It was something we enjoyed doing together, just a wonderful pastime and incredible creative experience.

How is working with Peter and Rebecca Work at their Ampelos Cellars?

Winemaking is not something you do to make real money. It's something you do because you are passionate about it. When you are around people who are even more passionate about it, it rubs off on you. Peter and Rebecca are just hilarious. We have so much fun with them.

Is there anything about winemaking that's like filmmaking?

I wouldn't stretch it that far, but I would say that I did have the realization of how creative the process really is. But what's very different from making movies is that everything in wine is connected to nature. Your grapes can only be as good as your year. That is one of the things that makes it very special and incredibly unique. You are at the mercy of your crop, and I love that. Though, we are telling a story. Every bottle has a story, and when you sit down and drink it, you feel connected to that story.

Your family has become quite the fixture in Los Alamos, California, a tiny little town off U.S. Route 101 that's exploded in recent years.

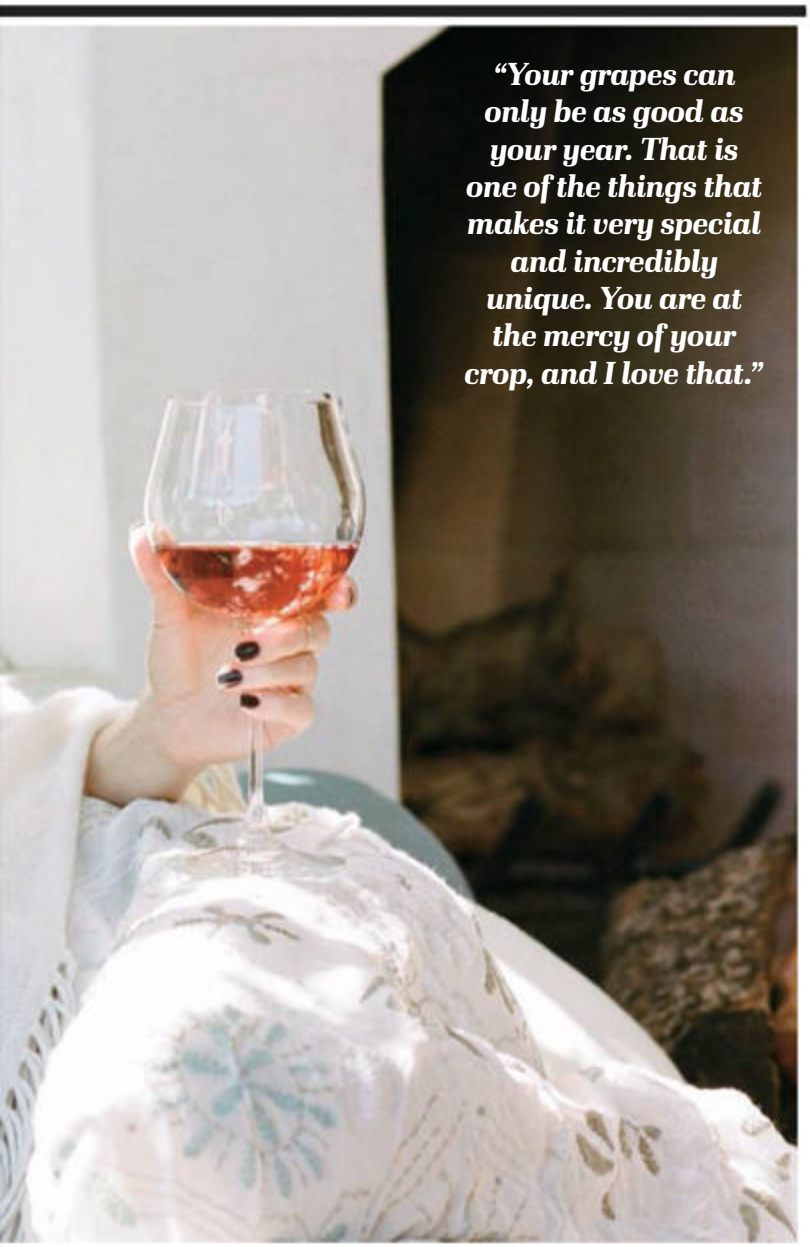
It's a great little town. I love our Wine Saloon. It suits our family. My aunt actually works there. It's a really great family environment; everybody knows everybody, and everybody supports everybody. It's a funny little town right off the freeway, but there is something incredibly romantic about it.

How did you decide which wines to make?

We spend most of our summer in Europe with the kids, and rosé is pretty much what we drink. So we started with rosés, and that's still my favorite. I love Sauvignon Blanc, and everyone told me not to attempt a California-style Sauvignon Blanc. I said, "Why not?"

So we made it. It's quite drinkable and has this grassiness to it. It's interesting, so we are going to try that one more time.

And my dad's Pinots are



"Your grapes can only be as good as your year. That is one of the things that makes it very special and incredibly unique. You are at the mercy of your crop, and I love that."

really beautiful, so we decided to do a single clone. I also love Cab. That's my jam!

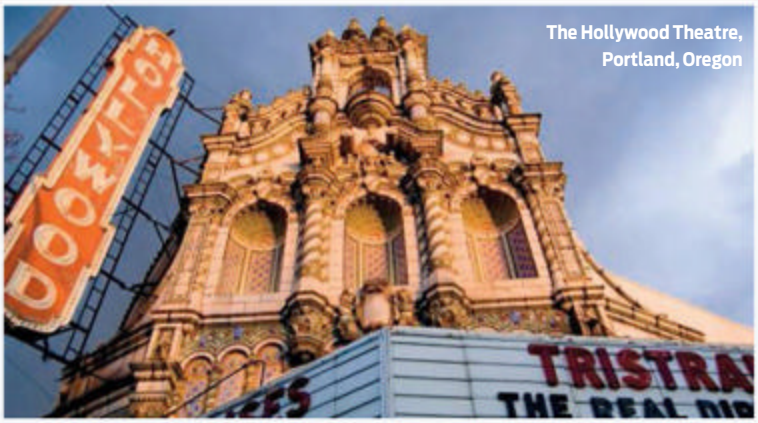
There are reports that you and Matt aren't together anymore. Will that affect the wine project?

We're family for the rest of our lives, we have a beautiful baby and we love making wine. We'll continue doing it.

How did the Farmville charity project happen?

It was good for The Hawn Foundation [which benefits from Hudson Bellamy, along with War Child] and good for the wine.

It was a two-week fun thing we did. My friends know the guys who did it, and they wanted to do a winemaking version. I got to have my own avatar, and I thought that was hilarious. —*Matt Kettmann*



The Hollywood Theatre, Portland, Oregon

Want a Pinot with your popcorn?

Raisinets and soda? Pshaw! At these theaters, wine and other boozy beverages get top billing.

Indie Food and Wine *(New York, NY)*

At the Film Society of Lincoln Center, movie buffs can indulge in 21 by-the-glass pours or seven cocktails offered at Indie, the accompanying restaurant that doubles as a highbrow concession stand. Don't miss the $25 dinner-and-a-movie deal, pairing food and wine with the eclectic mix of buzzy independent films.

Nitehawk *(Brooklyn, NY)*

With a lobby bar offering pre-show drinks and theater servers tending to your concession needs, Nitehawk ups the art-house theater ante. Snack on gourmet concessions like mushroom and truffle risotto balls or flatbread topped with Brussels sprouts and pancetta. Pair them with wines like the Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux Claud La Chapelle du Château Lamartine, available by the glass, carafe or bottle.

Showcase SuperLux *(Chestnut Hill, MA)*

With in-theater dining and an executive chef, SuperLux is the theater you deserve. The $28 ticket includes reserved seating and a $5 food-and-beverage voucher, perfect for trying out the California-leaning wine list. Bonus: The unlimited popcorn is complimentary.

Sundance Cinemas *(multiple locations)*

Wine pours vary at Sundance Cinemas' five U.S. locations. Catching a flick in Houston? Order the Mulderbosch Chardonnay from South Africa, paired with the thin-crust pear-and-Gorgonzola pizza. In Hollywood, opt for the local pour, Castoro Cabernet Sauvignon, from Paso Robles.

Hollywood Theatre *(Portland, OR)*

Opened in 1926—during the era of opulent movie palaces—the Hollywood Theatre fell into disrepair before being restored to its former glory by the nonprofit Film Action Oregon. It boasts a nationally recognized film program, a mix of indies and mainstream flicks, and award-winning educational offerings. The Hollywood screens more than 300 films a year, pouring drafts like Ninkasi Brewing Company's Vanilla Oatis Oatmeal Stout and Deschutes Brewery's Cinder Cone Red Ale.

The Carolina Asheville *(Asheville, NC)*

Screening both mainstream and independent releases, The Carolina Asheville offers drafts exclusively from local breweries, including Pisgah Brewing Company, French Broad Brewing Co., Catawba Brewing Co. and Highland Brewing Company. Pair your suds with a pizza made with fresh dough from nearby Geraldine's Bakery, topped with organic, local ingredients.

Alamo Drafthouse Cinema *(multiple locations)*

Founded in 1997 in Austin, Texas, the Alamo Drafthouse now boasts locations nationwide, screening both Hollywood blockbusters and special-interest series. Drawing crowds with themed nights like Terror Tuesdays (think gory horror movies from the 1960s–1980s) and Weird Wednesdays (featuring little-known "oddities in 35mm"), Alamo Drafthouse locations serve up local drafts alongside ever-changing food menus.
—*Joseph Hernandez*

MAP OF WINE COUNTRY STARS

Your guide to where the stars make wines, and where some of your favorite movies were filmed.



Sofia Coppola & Francis Ford Coppola own Francis Ford Coppola Winery.



Richard H. Frank, the former Disney chairman, co-owns Frank Family Vineyards with his wife, Leslie.





Raymond Burr's namesake winery is still going strong.



Fred MacMurray bought MacMurray Ranch in 1941.







Seth Rogen was married at Kunde Family Estate.



Robert Mark Kamen, who wrote *Taken*, owns and operates Kamen Estate Wines.



John Lasseter, who directed *Toy Story*, started Lasseter Family Winery in 1997.







Drew Barrymore makes her Barrymore Wine at Carmel Road winery.



Several scenes in **Sideways** (2004) were shot at Foxen Winery.



Kate Hudson started Hudson Bellamy in 2011. Watch out Kurt!





Kurt Russell, (stepdad to Kate Hudson) makes his GoGi Wines in Lompoc.



Fess Parker, star of *Old Yeller* (1957), founded Fess Parker Winery & Vineyard.

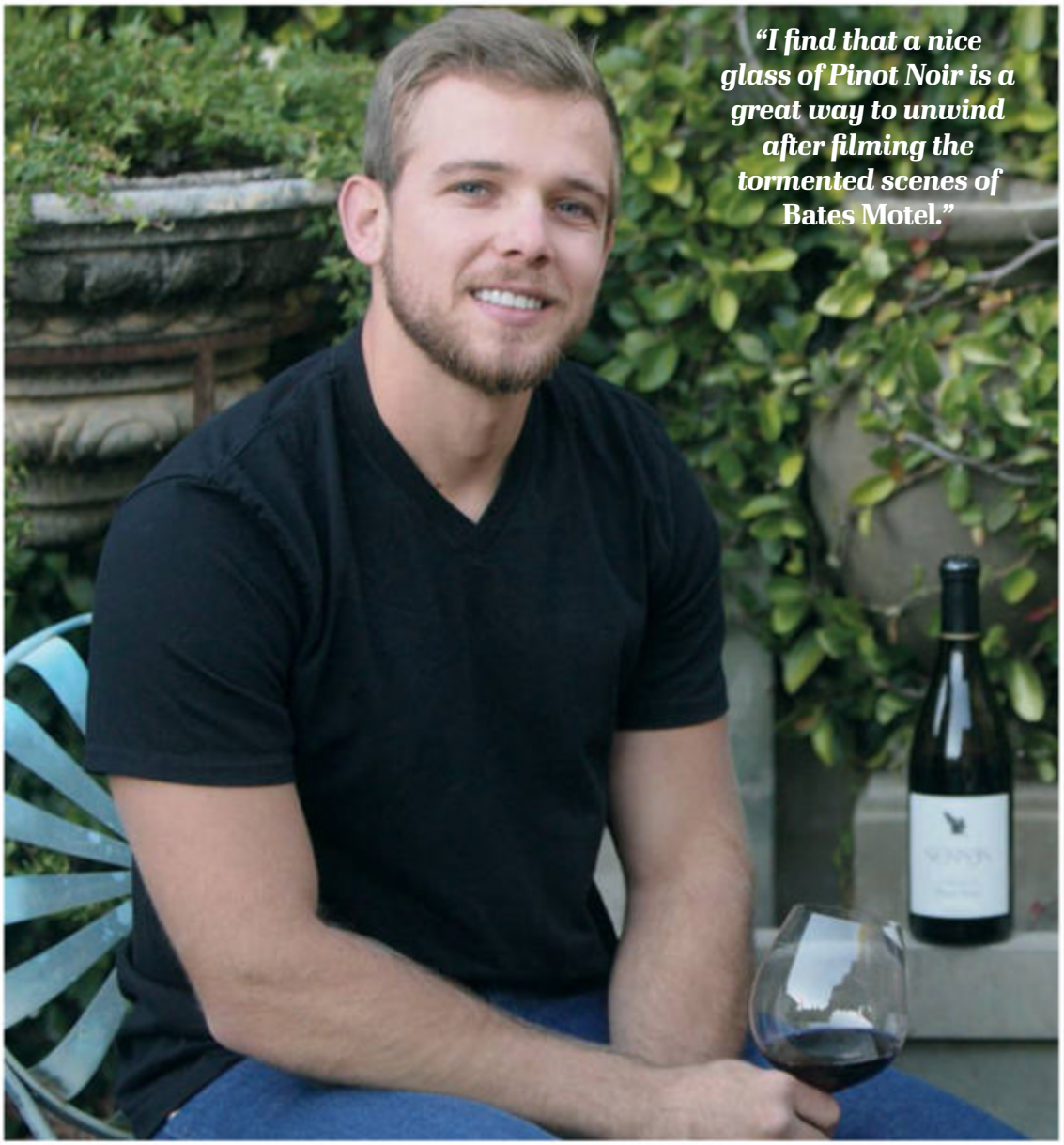
Max Thieriot

ACTOR, *BATES MOTEL*, *HOUSE AT THE END OF THE STREET*, *DISCONNECT*, *CATCH THAT KID*; CO-FOUNDER OF SENSES WINES

Do you see a connection between making movies and making wine?
Being a part of a film from the beginning to its release is sort of like making a bottle of wine. The location, the people involved, and so many other creative choices along the way ultimately define the product that will be released to the public. Whether it's a movie or a bottle of wine, at the end of the process, you have put countless hours and all of your energy into the final product in hopes that the audience or customers will cherish and enjoy what you have worked so hard to make.

When did you become interested in wine?
I began to have a real appreciation for wines when I saw how much pairing with different foods really influenced the taste of the wine. Watching my dad for so many years in the vineyard, I always knew I wanted to be a part of the industry, but my real passion was sparked when I was able to drink and appreciate the complexity and unique process that went into each bottle.

Outside of your own wine projects, are there other styles, regions and producers that interest you right now?
A recent interest of mine is cult Cabernet Sauvignon, and lately, I have had a lot of fun trying new Pinot Noirs from a variety of producers and wine regions. I have made a commitment to myself to taste wines from all different regions so I can broaden my understanding of wine. Wherever I am filming, I am always sure to grab some local wines. It has given me a great excuse to try things outside of the California producers that I have become fond of.



"I find that a nice glass of Pinot Noir is a great way to unwind after filming the tormented scenes of Bates Motel."

What wines do you try to have with you on set? Anything in particular that helps the creative process?
I always try to bring Senses with me to share with cast and crew. I find that a nice glass of Pinot Noir is a great way to unwind after filming the tormented scenes of *Bates Motel*.

Do you have any favorite movie scenes that include wine?
Number one: *The Silence of the Lambs* scene where Hannibal Lecter says to Clarice Starling, "A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti." Number two: In *Tombstone*, the Latin conversation bar scene between Doc Holliday and Johnny Ringo where Doc says, "*In vino veritas.*" And there will be a dinner scene [in] this season of *Bates Motel* where we drink Senses, so I am very excited about that. It sure was a lot of fun to film! —*Virginie Boone*

PAIRING WINE&FILM

The Genre: Western

Essence: Uniquely American style that started modest and maligned, but spread globally; usually a singular hero conquering harshness from both enemies and nature; very accessible, but with complexity underneath.

Watch: *Stagecoach* (1939); *High Noon* (1952); *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (1966); *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (1971); *Unforgiven* (1992)

The Wine: California Zinfandel

Essence: As big, rugged, boozy and all-American as John Wayne. Zinfandel, a domestic expression of the Primitivo grape, has the spice and grit of a good Western. With their great power and complexity, these pours have earned a place on the world wine stage.

Drink: A. Rafanelli 2012 Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley)



AARON GRAUBART

Wine in the Movies

A few of our favorite scenes where vino plays a starring role.



Casablanca (1942)
"Here's looking at you kid." Humphrey Bogart's joyful Champagne toast to Ingrid Bergman in Paris makes a heartbreaking return on a foggy Moroccan airfield—one of the greatest good-bye scenes ever.



Goldfinger (1964)
"My dear girl, there are some things that just aren't done. Such as drinking Dom Pérignon '53 above a temperature of 38 degrees Fahrenheit. That's as bad as listening to the Beatles without earmuffs."
—Sean Connery as 007



La Grande Bouffe (1973)
Not a bad way to go: Four unhappy, middle-aged friends decide to wine and dine themselves to death in this dark, raucus French-Italian comedy starring Marcello Mastroianni.

Gia Coppola

DIRECTOR & ACTRESS, *PALO ALTO, CASINO MOON, HEARTS OF DARKNESS: A FILMMAKER'S APOCALYPSE;* CREATOR OF FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA'S GIA WINES

Do you see a connection between making movies and making wine?
I feel like they're similar. You have to just keep plowing through and try to put all these separate pieces together in hopes that it all comes together the way you imagined it. The nice thing about wine is you can keep perfecting it each year. But with a movie, once you're done, you're done. You can't touch it again.

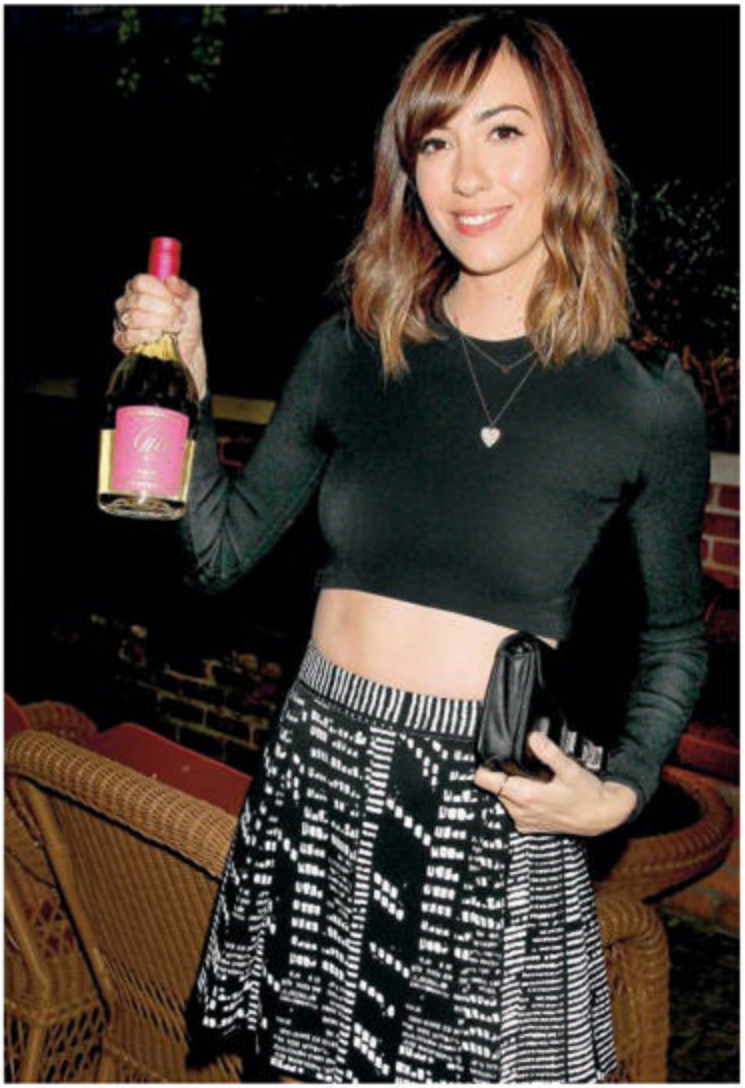
When did you become interested in wine?
When I finished college. I took a bartending course and then worked as a barback at Bouchon (in Yountville, California). I got very interested in the history and chemistry of beverages.

Outside of your own wine projects, are there other styles, regions and producers that interest you right now?
Whenever a friend brings over a bottle of wine, I take a picture of it. I'm very curious about why they picked that particular bottle. Most of the time, they just look at the price and grab a random bottle.

"Whenever a friend brings over a bottle of wine, I take a picture of it. I'm very curious about why they picked that particular bottle."

What wines do you try to have with you on set? Anything in particular that helps the creative process?
Well, it's probably illegal to drink on set, but when I'm writing, I find wine helps open and relax my mind.

Do you have any favorite movie scenes that include wine?
There's a movie called *La Grande Illusion*. They give [a punch] recipe in it. My grandpa [filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola] and I took the recipe and substituted the ingredients with Francis Ford Coppola Gia Frizzante and Gia Pinot Grigio. —*V.B.*



DAVE ALLOCCA/STARPIX



The Muppet Movie (1979)
Kermit: "Waiter, the wine please." *Miss Piggy*: "You mad, impetuous thing, it's Champagne!" *Snooty somm (Steve Martin)*: "Not exactly. Sparkling Moscatel, one of the finest wines from Idaho!"



The Jerk (1979)
Steve Martin, when asked if he'd like another bottle of Château Latour: "Yes, but no more 1966. Let's splurge! Bring us some fresh wine, the freshest you've got. This year's! No more of this old stuff. He doesn't realize he's dealing with sophisticated people here."



Caddyshack (1980)
While christening his new "sloop," *Ted Knight* reads a really bad jokey poem. He then cues his wife, Pookie, who proudly declares, "I christen thee, *The Flying WASP.*" Pookie then swings a bottle of Champagne at the bow—which cleanly breaks off the boat's bowsprit.



Blues Brothers (1980)
Jim Belushi: "Give us a bottle of your finest Champagne, five shrimp cocktails and some bread for my brother." The waiter pours out. *Dan Ackroyd* raises his giant water glass. *Waiter:* "Sir, wrong glass." *Ackroyd* then gives him a come-hither wave with the giant goblet.

Michael Lynne

CO-FOUNDER OF NEW LINE CINEMA AND UNIQUE FEATURES; OWNER OF BEDELL CELLARS ON THE NORTH FORK OF LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

How did you become so personally involved in wine?

I have an affinity for things that aren't just one plus one equals two, things that have other dimensions to them. I love the film world and contemporary art and wine, because they all have this creative aspect to them.

Are there linkages in the way you manage film production and wine production?

There are unexpected consequences you just can't control in both film and wine production. Very often with winemaking, it's weather. In the film business, it could be weather or a multitude of other things. Neither is a process that can be controlled by one person. They are both intensive group exercises, with personnel having a very important effect [on] the success of the product.

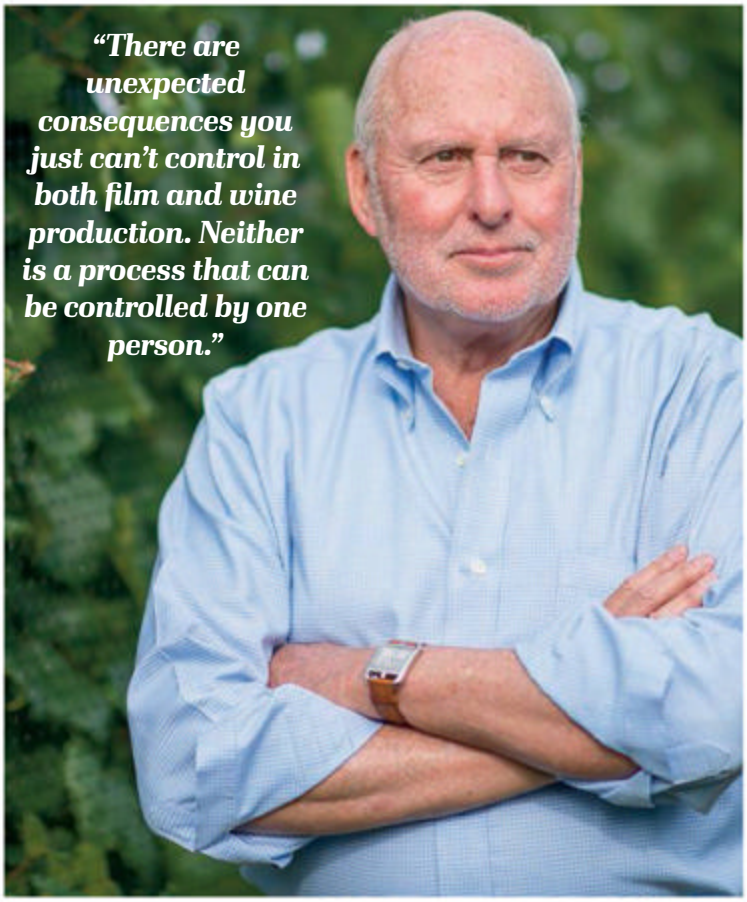
As a longtime collector of fine wines, how has your collection changed over the last 20 years?

The focus of my collection used to be primarily first-, second- and third-growth Bordeaux wines. I still love Italian wines, particularly Tuscan blends, and have always been passionate about Spanish wines. As I've grown older, and you could argue wiser, my tastes may have changed a bit, and I'm much more into quality Burgundy wines.

What wines would you pull out of your cellar if you had only one day left on earth?

Well, I'd probably call my doctor first…but I'd go for a Vega Sicilia, an astonishing Spanish red wine. For a white wine, maybe something like an Italian Gavi. Quite candidly though, there are probably 12 other wines I'd have to consider as well.

For a casual night at home, what's an ideal movie and wine pairing?



I'll exclude my own movies, just to be fair, but I think I'd watch [*The Godfather*], which [is] such an extraordinary movie, and have a great Tuscan blend to go with it. For dinner, maybe pasta puttanesca. —*Anna Lee C. Iijima*

Wine in the Movies (Part Deux)



Babette's Feast (1987)
Babette secretly spends all of her money to craft a sumptuous meal for the pious sisters who employ her and members of their church. *Sister*: "Surely that isn't wine." *Babette*: "No, that isn't wine. It's Clos de Vougeot, 1845." Watch uptight Danes discover the joys of Burgundy.



Withnail & I (1987)
"Balls! We want the finest wines available to humanity. And we want them here, and we want them now!" The movie ends as Withnail recites Hamlet to wolves in the rain and enjoys a nice Claret.



The Princess Bride (1987)
Dread Pirate Roberts (Cary Elwes): You guessed wrong.
Vizzini (Wallace Shawn): You only think I guessed wrong! That's what's so funny! I switched glasses.... Never go against a Sicilian when death is on the line! Ha ha ha. *(Vizzini then falls over dead.)*



Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (1988)
The wine collector's conundrum:
Michael Caine: "You can't drink them, Freddy. They're far too valuable."
Steve Martin: "So you sell them?"
Caine: "I'd never sell them, they mean too much to me."



AARON GRAUBART

PAIRING WINE&FILM

The Genre: Romantic Comedy

Essence: Fun and juicy; seek to enhance feelings of affection and compassion; lighthearted, captivating tales of personal relationships; happy endings guaranteed.

Watch: *The Seven Year Itch* (1955); *When Harry Met Sally* (1989); *Groundhog Day* (1993); *Notting Hill* (1999); *Enough Said* (2013)

The Wine: Cru Beaujolais

Essence: Juicy-fruity Beaujolais goes down easy, but don't mistake it for shallow. Wines made in the Cru regions can show serious complexity, and Moulin-à-Vent, in particular, is as enduring as *Sleepless in Seattle*.

Drink: Château des Jacques 2012 Moulin-à-Vent



Goodfellas (1990)
Scorsese's legendary Steadicam shot from the street through the kitchen to the packed dining room floor ends with a bottle of Dom Pérignon, compliments of Mr. Tony. It sure pays to know people.



Silence of the Lambs (1991)
Hannibal Lecter: Cannibal, foodie and not a fan of America's head count. "A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti."



Wayne's World (1992)
Mike Myers explains the Champagne-*Star Trek* simile: "It's a lot like *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. In many ways it's superior, but will never be as recognized as the orginal." A little insight from Wayne on the new guard of American sparklers.



Ratatouille (2007)
Head chef Skinner to bumbling cook Linguini: "But you would have to be an idiot of elephantine proportions not to appreciate this '61 Château Latour, and you, Monsieur Linguini, are no idiot. Let us toast your non-idiocy!"

The INTERVIEW

Jason Wise

DIRECTOR OF THE DOCUMENTARY *SOMM* (2012) AND THE UPCOMING *SOMM: INTO THE BOTTLE*

What was your take on sommeliers before your first film?

I started as a bartender and I didn't have many crossings with them. But to me they were people who were very formal, very untouchable. That's pretty much how I walked into the first film. But right away, while filming in San Francisco, I found somms in shorts and V-necks working the floor. It was an eye-opener.

How important is a sommelier to dining?

A restaurant should have a sommelier. I am a complete believer in this. It's such a cliché, but there is so much goddamned wine out there. And yeah, you want a restaurant to have a lot of variety, but you'd rather have a person be like, "You gotta try this." You want someone who is really excited about helping you discover something new.

***What are trying to do with your upcoming* Somm: Into the Bottle?**

Somm wasn't a movie about wine per se. Ultimately it was a character driven movie. After filming that, I realized I wanted to make a movie about actual wine—a subject that is usually really boring and difficult to capture on film. But I really wanted that challenge so this is an entertaining look at the colossal world of wine, like the planet Earth of wine. We start with a couple walking into a restaurant and are handed this huge-ass confusing wine list—something we all have experienced at one time or another.



So how do sommeliers play into the film?

We look at how vast the world is through the eyes of the best somms, and all the things they experience to essentially get that bottle on a list, what a somm does when not working the floor. It has a lot of what I like to call wine porn, we try some bottles that are probably worth, seriously, more than the entire budget of my first film. We visit cellars in Europe no one is allowed to go to—stuff that will really wow equally those who know wine and those who don't.

The artisan food and beer movements certainly helped, but don't you think* Somm *solidified the sommelier in our wider culture?

I think you have the collection of foodies and all that, where people want to know where their food and wine came from, and what the hell is in it, and not just from health or environmental standpoints—people are just interested in that now. It's becaome a hobby of sorts. There's people posting Instagram pictures of their food. It's that simple.

Come on. You're being modest. A lot more people know what the heck a sommelier is now.

Well, I can tell you that *Parks and Recreation* did a sommelier episode and the head writer reached out to me to help with research. And I saw just the other day there was this Sonic commercial with a sommelier in the car. So, yeah, I think the awareness of the somm as a thing—and even in terms of just knowing the word sommelier—has definitely exploded.

—*Mike Dawson*

The Greatest Wine Movies Of All Time

The Secret of Santa Vittoria (1969): In 1943, the German army occupies the Italian hillside town of Santa Vittoria. The troops want to confiscate the region's prized wine, but the wily, oft-inebriated mayor (Anthony Quinn) and townspeople hide one million bottles in a cave.

Year of the Comet (1992): Instead of vineyards, the setting is the Scottish Highlands for this caper, in which a prim young woman uncovers the most expensive bottle of wine in the world. Can she and her boorish bodyguard fend off thieves and the temptations of unlikely love?

A Walk in the Clouds (1995): "My family has a vineyard in Napa," a beautiful, unmarried—and pregnant—woman tells a soldier (Keanu Reeves) returning home from World War II. He offers to pose as her husband, but soon falls in love with her, except her tyrannical father blocks their happiness.



Sideways (2004): "Its flavors... they're just the most haunting and brilliant and thrilling and subtle and ancient on the planet." That's how Miles (Paul Giamatti) describes Pinot Noir in this on-the-road ode to life, friendship and uncorking the perfect bottle, filmed in Santa Barbara County.

A Good Year (2006): Channeling rom-com aplomb, Russell Crowe plays a cutthroat investment banker who inherits his uncle's chateau in Provence. The lush, tranquil vineyards do not pair with his hard-driving life—or must he change his life to save it? An alluring café owner (Marion Cotillard) adds amour.

Bottle Shock (2008): Oozing connoisseurship and comedic timing, Alan Rickman portrays Stephen Spurrier, English wine merchant who set up the Judgment of Paris, the famed 1976 blind tasting that pit American wines against France's best. The film also chronicles a tumultuous father-son relationship that grows into trust.

A Heavenly Vintage (2009): This is a tale of a 19th-century French peasant who longs to make great wine. In his quest, he's inspired by his beautiful wife and a proud baroness, as well as Xas, a male angel who tempts with tantalizing secrets.

You Will Be My Son (2011): A despotic vineyard owner in Saint-Émilion scorns his unassuming son, doubting his ability to take over the business. Instead, he favors his son's charismatic childhood friend, and family tensions build (French with English subtitles).

Somm (2012): During nearly 40 years, only 220 professionals worldwide have passed the Master Sommelier exam, which is considered one of the crowning achievements of wine knowledge. This documentary follows four candidates as they swirl, sip and study for the test.

Red Obsession (2013): Demand hugely exceeds supply for the Premiers Crus of Bordeaux. This lavish documentary looks at how China's relentless pursuit of prestige bottlings affects these chateaus.

IN THEATERS NOW

A Year in Champagne (2014): Uncorking at film festivals everywhere, this effervescent tribute to the world's most famous wine comes from creators of the acclaimed *A Year in Burgundy*. The documentary bubbles over with behind-the-scenes looks at small producers, the illustrious houses and the wondrous grape-growing season itself.



AARON GRAUBART

PAIRING WINE&FILM

The Genre: Science Fiction

Essence: Usually set in the future or in fantasy environments that defy conventional science; use inexplicable phenomena to plumb psychological depths; many have proven prescient.

Watch: *La Jetée* (1962); *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968); *Blade Runner* (1982); *Children of Men* (2006); *Under the Skin* (2013)

The Wine: Biodynamic South African Sauvignon Blanc

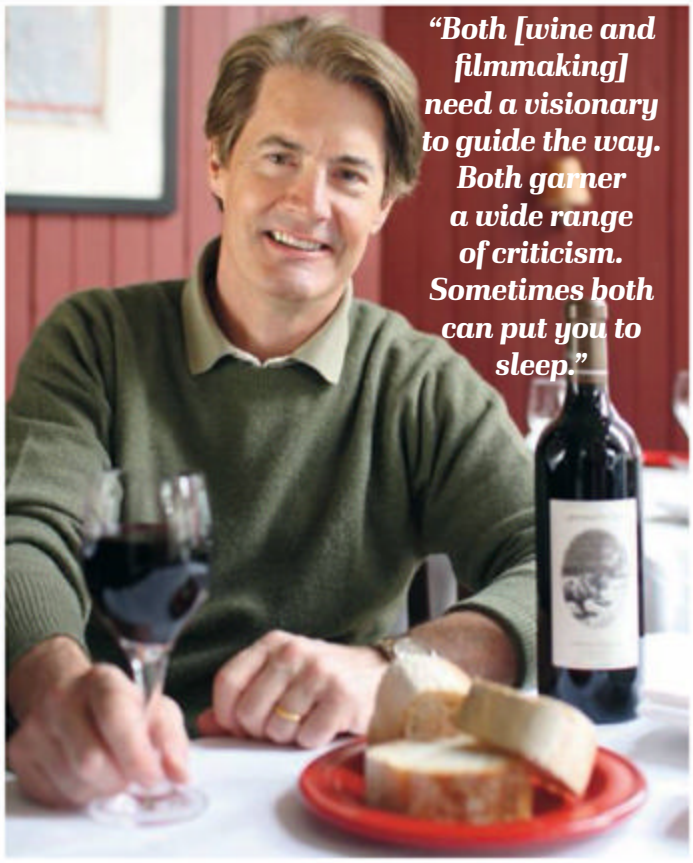
Essence: Conventional science may have a hard time explaining the holistic, astro-spiritual tenets of biodynamic farming, but the often-delicious wines have won generations of fans, and turned skeptics into believers.

Drink: Reyneke 2013 Reserve Sauvignon Blanc (Stellenbosch)

The INTERVIEW

Kyle MacLachlan

ACTOR, *TWIN PEAKS, PORTLANDIA, SEX AND THE CITY, SHOWGIRLS, THE DOORS, BLUE VELVET, DUNE;* CO-OWNER PURSUED BY BEAR WINE



MELISSA HORN

Do you see a connection between making movies and making wine?

Definitely. Both are creative journeys. Both take a long time to come to fruition. Both can be met initially with resistance and then be re-evaluated down the road. Both involve bringing together different elements to create (hopefully) a sublime experience. Both need a visionary to guide the way. Both garner a wide range of criticism. Sometimes both can put you to sleep.

When did you become interested in wine?

My wine education started at the family dinner table of my high school sweetheart. A nice, round Chardonnay was usually on the menu, and I was allowed a glass. I progressed from there, or I should say regressed from there, to some very mundane reds before hitting my stride in the mid-1980s visiting the Napa Valley and wandering through wineries like Beaulieu Vineyard, Rutherford Hill and Chateau Montelena. Not long after, I met Ann Colgin, who introduced me to what are now the cult classics of Napa. I filled my cellar with Colgin, Harlan Estate and the like. This led me to explore my home state of Washington, particularly eastern Washington, where wine production is hitting its stride.

Outside of your own wine projects, are there other styles, regions and producers that interest you right now?

I like to try wines from different parts of the world and areas that I'm not that familiar with: Argentine Malbec, Sicilian Nero d'Avola, German Riesling. But really, I'm most interested in what's happening in my own backyard, that is, the other wines that are coming out of Washington State. I want to know where they are growing amazing grapes and who is making killer wine. So I drink a lot of wine from Washington.

What do you pour on set? Do any wines help you with the creative process?

Wine tends to blur the creative process for me!

Do you have any favorite movie scenes where wine plays a major part—or at least makes a memorable cameo?

I remember working on *Desperate Housewives* [when] they came to me to ask if they could use my wine in a scene with Bree and Orson. I said they had to pay me a usage fee. Just kidding! That was some of the best free publicity I could ever have! In fact, I haven't seen many films where the wine is given enough importance. Maybe *Sideways*, and they gave Merlot such a bad time that the price per ton dropped so [low] you could get extraordinary Merlot grapes for nothing! —*V.B.*

Movie Night in the Vineyard!



Early Mountain Vineyards, *Madison, VA*

From March to October, Early Mountain hosts monthly Sips and Cinema screenings. A $30 season pass includes admission to all eight screenings, with popcorn. Before the film, grab a glass of Early Mountain's Eluvium Bordeaux-style red blend.

King Ferry Winery, *King Ferry, NY*

Treleaven Wines transforms its barrel room into a movie theater. Recent screenings include *The Departed* and 1942 classic *Casablanca*. The winery's tasting room is open throughout the screening for your vinous concession needs.

One Woman Wines & Vineyards, *Southold, NY*

Now in its sixth year, One Woman's Tasting Under the Stars series is a Long Island favorite. Pack a picnic for this candlelit affair, which features an outdoor film, a bonfire, s'mores and even a telescope for viewing the sky. Make your reservations early, as picnic-table seating fills up fast.

Ram's Gate Winery, *Sonoma, CA*

During autumn, Ram's Gate opens up its outdoor pavilion and gallery to entice both movie and wine lovers. The winery introduces spot-on wine pairings to go with classic films. Guests have sipped the winery's Carneros Pinot Noir with the 1980s comedy *Trading Places* and Syrah with *Edward Scissorhands*.

Veramar Vineyard, *Berryville, VA*

Located just an hour from Washington, D.C., Veramar hosts an annual movie night beneath the stars. Movies begin at dusk, so bring a picnic to enjoy with Veramar's wines. Pop open a bottle of the 2013 Estate Club Chardonnay or the 2012 Cabernet Franc to sip alongside wine-geek favorite *Bottle Shock*.

Wente Vineyards, *Livermore, CA*

In July and August, this winery known for its eclectic music series also offers a complimentary cinema series under the stars. Picnic dinners are encouraged and wine and food is available for purchase on site. Pair Wente's lauded Chardonnay with a screening of films like *Caddyshack* or *Star Wars*.—*J.H.*

THE DEUTSCH DIFFERENCE

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87

Best Buy
Wine Enthusiast

JOSH CELLARS
Sauvignon Blanc
2012



90

Editors' Choice
Wine Enthusiast

GIRARD
Sauvignon Blanc
2013



94

Cellar Selection
Wine Enthusiast

ANDRE LURTON
Chateau La Louviére
White
2012



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Wine & Spirits
Competition

THE CROSSINGS
Sauvignon Blanc
2013



91+

"Classical"
Wine Advocate

RAMÓN BILBAO
Reserva
2008



89

BEST VALUE
Wine Spectator

RAMÓN BILBAO
Crianza
2011

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WINE ENTHUSIAST Wine & Film Series

We're clearly passionate about film, and we want to share our love of cinema—and wine—with you.

Throughout the months of April–June 2015, *Wine Enthusiast* presents a collection of screenings of the most celebrated wine-focused films at five innovative independent theaters across the country. From *SOMM* to *Sideways* and beyond, pair your love of what's on the screen and in the glass, and join us for the post-film wine party.

The venues:

Jacob Burns Film Center, Pleasantville, New York

Coolidge Corner Theater, Brookline, Massachusetts

Music Box Theatre, Chicago, Illinois

Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor, Michigan

California Film Institute, San Rafael, California

For specific dates, times and screenings, go to page 16.

If you could share a drink with any actor, who would it be and what would be your choice of drink? #WEfilm

@WineEnthusiast 60 yr Macallan Lalique with Dean Martin #WEfilm —@HurricaneinWS



@WineEnthusiast vodka cranberry w/ Charlie Chaplin #WEfilm —@1tanctil



@WineEnthusiast George Clooney, Jay-Z, Tom Ford, and Henry Kissinger! I'd share either a bottle of Whisky or Mouton Rothschild#WEfilm —@ChrisAlfieReyes



AARON GRAUBART

PAIRING WINE&FILM

The Genre: Film Noir

Essence: Stylized and sexy, tense and melodramatic; characters acerbic and usually smoking; once considered old-fashioned, its sexy iconic examples are influential classics.

Watch:
The Big Sleep (1946); *The Third Man* (1949); *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955); *Blood Simple* (1984); *Mulholland Drive* (2001)

The Wine: Aged Barolo

Essence: With its classic nose of tar, dried roses and a whiff of tobacco—and a garnet color fading to sepia with each passing year—aged Barolo exudes drama and elegance.

Drink: Cavallotto 2007 Bricco Boschis Vigna San Giuseppe Riserva (Barolo)


Sonoma
AL FRESCO
Californians enjoy wining and dining outdoors year-round, and you can join the party this summer with one of Jordan Winery's new epicurean experiences in Sonoma County. Watch sunset during a hilltop feast, dine under the stars on the winery lawn, or tour and taste your way across the 1,200-acre estate. Unforgettable ways to feed your senses. *Visit jordanwinery.com/events for details.*
Jordan
Please enjoy responsibly. ©2015 Jordan Vineyard & Winery, Healdsburg, CA

The INTERVIEW

Brenda & Marc Lhormer

CO-FOUNDERS, CO-DIRECTOR (BRENDA), EXECUTIVE & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR (MARC), NAPA VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL; PRODUCERS OF *BOTTLE SHOCK*

What's the connection between film and winemaking?

ML: Making wine is more like independent filmmaking, rather than a movie coming out of the big studio system, where no one's original vision ends up on the screen. In the Napa Valley, many wineries are small, family-run operations. They have unique vision, perseverance, ability to rally a team, collaboration, and they never lose sight of what their original intent was, all the way through [to] the finished product.

What synergy do you see between wine country and a top film festival? What makes it work?

BL: We want to take everything the Napa Valley is known for—art and natural beauty, food and hospitality—and integrate it into the film festival. I don't know any other film festival that has culinary demonstrations with famous chefs and wine tastings, with 150 wineries working with us. It shows off what Napa Valley has to offer.

How is the wine country location an advantage for attracting top talent to attend the Napa Valley Film Festival?

ML: Wine country is a bucket-list destination. It enables us to produce a festival that doesn't look like anybody else's. Experiences are richer, with the conversations going down with the fantastic wine and the food. **BL:** Publicists are calling us to see, will we take their film? The stars are not just on a red carpet. They're on a red carpet in the Napa Valley, showing their films to a very appreciative audience right when the nominations for the Oscars and the Golden Globes are starting to occur.

Any wines you're excited about? What's in your cellar?

BL: We're not wine snobs or collectors, but we buy as much as wine as we can and then we drink it. We just got back from Australia—all I care about now is a case of Australian Shiraz in our cellar. In Napa, B Cellars makes a Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc [and] Viognier blend—Blend 23—[incorporating] my favorite white wine varieties. For special occasions, Annie Favia and Andy Erickson do an innovative red blend, Leviathan. Elevage Blanc from Chimney Rock is superelegant. And Reynolds Family Winery Cab is on our top list.

Anything else to add?

ML: Wine is like film in that there are different price points, the low-budget movie and the big-budget movie. When you have more money, you can afford something better. With wine you wonder, "If I spend twice as much, will it be twice as good?" Just like the movies. —*Risa Wyatt*

"We're not wine snobs or collectors, but we buy as much as wine as we can and then we drink it."



MARIO/VINCE PIOMBO

The Napa Valley Film Festival *runs November 11–15. For details, visit napavalleyfilmfest.org.*

For more celebrity Q&As, plus exclusive news on wine-and-film events, visit winemag.com/filmissue


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RESERVA

ITALIAN WINES WITH ALTITUDE

Thanks to recent climate change, some of Europe's most elegant vintages are being produced from the mountainous terrain of northern Italy.

BY KERIN O'KEEFE
PHOTOS BY MEG BAGGOTT





If rocky cliffs, soaring heights, snow-capped mountains and gusts of wind don't immediately come to mind when conjuring up images of Italian vineyards, think again.

Some of the country's most exciting wines hail from these extreme conditions. And while brave winemakers have utilized high-altitude vineyards for centuries, climate change has generated welcome benefits in these mountainous growing zones.

It's easy to forget that up until the mid-1990s, getting the grapes to fully ripen was perhaps the biggest challenge facing quality-minded Italian wine producers. Long, harsh winters and wet, cool summers in northern and central Italy meant that grapes had difficulty attaining perfect maturity. High yields and low-density plantings fueled the problem.

Fast-forward 20 years: With the exception of a few cool, wet vintages like 2014, reaching ideal ripeness is no longer a problem anywhere on the peninsula. Winemakers now grapple with high grape sugars and plummeting acidity, the results of prolonged heat waves and droughts that have become the norm.

And if Barolo and Brunello producers once had difficulty reaching alcohol levels of 13 percent, crafting wines with less than 15% abv is today's challenge.

But this climate change has aided Italy's elevated vineyard areas, including Alto Adige, Carema, Valle d'Aosta and Valtellina, which are turning out balanced wines of structure and finesse.

ALTO ADIGE

Wedged between Austria and Switzerland in the portion of the Italian Alps known as the Dolomites, Alto Adige, also called Südtirol, is Italy's northernmost wine-producing area.

Officially part of the Trentino-Alto Adige region, Alto Adige was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until it was annexed to Italy after World War I. Both Italian and German are spoken here, and the names of local towns and wines appear in both languages.

Alto Adige has nearly 13,000 acres of vineyards, ranging in altitude from 600 feet to 3,300 feet above sea level. It boasts a multitude of microclimates, from mild to Alpine. In the north, the towering Alps protect the growing zone from severe storms and frigid temperatures, while the central valleys and southern areas enjoy warm breezes from the Mediterranean.

The area is most celebrated for its fresh, structured, mineral-driven whites, which account for 60 percent of total production. The main varieties are Pinot Grigio, Gewürztraminer (named in part after the Alto Adige town of Tramin), Chardonnay, Pinot Bianco and Sauvignon Blanc.

The coolest parts of the growing zone also produce Sylvaner, Kerner, Müller-Thurgau, Grüner Veltliner and Riesling. Alto Adige's reds include silky Schiava, velvety Lagrein and fragrant Pinot Nero.

There are more than 150 wineries in the area, including 13 cooperative cellars that turn out over 70 percent of the region's wine. Unlike quantity-driven operations in many other parts of Italy, Alto Adige's cooperatives focus on quality and consistently produce fantastic wines, like those from St. Michael-Eppan, Nals Margreid, Cantina Terlano and St. Pauls Winery. Most of the area's wineries are located south of the city of Bolzano, like the private estate of Elena Walch.

Elena Walch Family Estates has prime vineyards in two key areas: Tramin, where the winery is headquartered, and Caldaro.

According to Karoline Walch, who runs the estate with her sister, Julia,



92 Abbazia di Novacella 2013 Praepositus Kerner (Alto Adige Valle Isarco). This radiant white opens with alluring aromas of acacia, apricot, citrus and Alpine herb. The linear, elegant palate offers juicy yellow peach, lemon zest, mint and hazelnut alongside crisp acidity. Abbazia di Novacella USA. ***Editors' Choice.***
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $25

92 Manincor 2012 Mason Pinot Nero (Alto Adige). Structured and elegant, this stunning Pinot Nero opens with aromas of strawberry, mint, forest floor and an earthy note of leather. The savory palate delivers juicy wild cherry, mineral and baking spice alongside firm, polished tannins. Cantiniere.
abv: 13% **Price:** $45

91 Elena Walch 2013 Castel Ringberg Sauvignon (Alto Adige). Here's a structured, delicious Sauvignon that opens with classic aromas of tropical fruit, cut grass and crushed tomato vine. The linear palate boasts a nice depth of flavors, including juicy cantaloupe, creamy peach and a note of candied ginger. It's well balanced, with mouthwatering acidity. USA Wine West.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $22



91 Franz Haas 2011 Lagrein (Alto Adige). Here's a solid red that opens with aromas of ripe, dark berry, violet and a whiff of spice. The savory palate delivers layers of crushed blackberry, juicy raspberry, white pepper, clove and cocoa alongside fresh acidity and firm, velvety tannins. Empson USA Ltd.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $37

90 Baron Widmann 2013 Vernatsch Schiava (Alto Adige). This lightly colored, luminous wine opens with intense aromas of rose and woodland berry. The vibrant palate offers wild strawberry, crushed red cherry, orange zest and almond that follow through to the lingering finish. Crisp acidity and supple tannins balance the juicy fruit flavors. Oliver McCrum Wines.
abv: 13% **Price:** $24

90 St. Pauls 2013 Passion Sauvignon (Alto Adige). Made with Sauvignon cultivated in high mountain vineyards, this vibrant, firmly structured wine opens with aromas of tropical fruit, crushed tomato vine and a whiff of hay. The linear palate offers passion fruit, Alpine herb and fennel alongside brisk acidity that leaves a pristine finish. Ethica Wines.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $29

and her mother, Elena, the steep, south-facing Kastelaz Vineyard in Tramin (1,115–1,240 feet above sea level) gets sun all day and cold nighttime winds from the Alps. These marked temperature changes allow the grapes to maintain bright acidity.

Castel Ringberg in Caldaro, the largest single vineyard in Alto Adige (985–1,312 feet above sea level), boasts different soils, while its vicinity to Lake Caldaro generates a milder climate than in Tramin.

> Alto Adige's cooperatives consistently produce fantastic wines.

"Wines from Tramin show crisp acidity and bright minerality, while Castel Ringberg wines show slightly more depth and are more ample," says Walch.

In the extreme north, near the Austrian border, the Valle Isarco produces whites with uncommon finesse. This is home to Abbazia di Novacella, an active abbey that produces enticing whites, including Sylvaner, Kerner, Gewürztraminer and Veltliner, from mineral-rich soil and precipitous vineyards at altitudes between 1,970–2,950 feet. The abbey's flagship Praepositus range of wines shows remarkable depth and structure.

Warm, sunny days and cold nights create perfumed aromas and fresh acidity, but not long ago, the rigid Alpine winters put grapevines at risk.

"Until about 10 years ago, dry, frigid temperatures and cold winds destroyed up to 10 percent of the grapevines every winter," says Urban von Klebelsberg, the abbey's secular CEO and trained agronomist.

"During the brutal winter of 1981–1982, 90 percent of the vines died," he says. "The other problem was that berries and the shoots had difficulty ripening. But for the last 10 years, thanks to warmer average temperatures, almost no grapevines have died over the winter, and both the shoots and the grapes now ripen fully and produce higher-quality wines."



"We don't have Barolo's muscle, but we do have exquisite perfumes."
—Roberto Ferrando

95 Ferrando 2010 Black Label (Carema). Aromas of underbrush, leather, flint, wild berry and a balsamic note mingle in the glass. The structured palate delivers dried cherry, crushed raspberry, grilled herb and anise alongside firm, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Hold for additional complexity; drink 2018–2035. Rosenthal Wine Merchants.
abv: 14% **Price:** $90

94 Ferrando 2010 White Label (Carema). Violet, rose, cherry, baking spice, Alpine herb and mineral are some of the aromas and flavors you'll find on this radiant Nebbiolo. Bright acidity and silky tannins balance the juicy palate. It's elegant and boasts great depth, but will continue to evolve for years. Drink through 2030. Rosenthal Wine Merchants.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $60

91 Cantina dei Produttori Nebbiolo di Carema 2010 Riserva (Carema). Rose petal, violet, woodland berry, sage and eucalyptus aromas come together in the glass. The juicy palate doles out ripe strawberry, red cherry, cinnamon spice and nectarine zest alongside bright acidity and lithe tannins. Enjoy through 2025. Polaner Selections.
abv: 13% **Price:** $29

CAREMA

Located in northwest Piedmont on the border with Valle d'Aosta, the tiny Carema DOC hosts only 42 acres of vineyards and two producers, Luigi Ferrando and Cantina dei Produttori Nebbiolo di Carema, a cooperative cellar.

Both wineries make Carema exclusively, using only Nebbiolo. Although the limited production means this elegant red is hard to find outside the region, it boasts a cult following, as nearly half the production is exported around the world.

With Monte Bianco looming above, the spectacular growing area starts at the foot of Monte Miletto. Rows of stone walls delimit Carema's steeply terraced vineyards, where growers still use the ancient pergola training system supported by rounded stone columns.

During the chilly nights, the stone releases heat accumulated during the day to help protect grapes from the cold. Harvesting is entirely done by hand, as well as almost all vineyard maintenance, earning the label of heroic viticulture.

Refined bouquets, silky tannins, bright acidity and serious longevity are the hallmarks of Carema.

"We don't have Barolo's muscle, but we do have exquisite perfumes that exalt the floral and earthy characteristics of Nebbiolo," says Roberto Ferrando, who runs the winery with his father, Luigi, and his brother, Andrea.

"We're further north than Barolo, in an amphitheater at the foot of the mountains, where we have cooler temperatures and strong wind all year round," he says. "We also have marked day and night temperature changes that prolong the growing season and generate more complex aromas.

"And because our vineyards are higher, up to 1,800 feet, we have naturally high acidity in our wines, giving Carema a slow but constant evolution."

Ferrando says that warmer temperatures in the last decade "have definitely favored grape ripening in Carema. For example, for the last 10 years, our wines naturally reach 13.5 percent, up from the 12 percent that used to be the norm."

VALLE D'AOSTA

In Valle d'Aosta, high mountain vineyards produce sleek, fragrant reds and crisp, vibrant whites. In the lower valley, the Donnas denomination, where vineyards are carved into mountainsides, produces classic reds.

The Caves Cooperatives de Donnas's white label Donnas contains 90 percent Nebbiolo (the rest is a mix of Freisa and Neyret). This elegant wine epitomizes the charming, graceful side of the grape.

Further north around the mountain towns of Morgex and La Salle, growers cultivate the native grape Prié Blanc, the sole variety comprising the region's premier white, Blanc de Morgex et de la Salle.

Using fruit grown in vineyards from among the highest altitudes in Europe (between 3,100–3,937 feet), Blanc de Morgex et de la Salle is floral and crisp, with a pristine quality that reflects the pure mountain air.

Surrounded by snow-capped peaks, Blanc de Morgex et de la Salle's steeply terraced vineyards are among the few left in the world that have not been ravaged by phylloxera, the root-eating louse that decimated grapevines across Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

"There's evidence the louse arrived, but quickly died off, either due to the sandy soils deposited by avalanches or because of the frigid weather," says Nicola Del Negro, enologist and managing director at Cave du Vin Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle, a cooperative cellar and the largest local producer.

"As a result, grapevines here aren't grafted onto American rootstocks, like almost everywhere else in the world, but grow directly on their own roots."

Vines here average about 50 years old, but growers say many plants have been producing for over a century.

The area pushes viticulture to the limit, but ripening is better than ever, yielding wines with more body.

"Fifteen years ago, our wines only reached 9 percent alcohol, but now they are naturally between 11.5 and 12 percent," says Del Negro.



High mountain vineyards produce sleek, fragrant reds and crisp, vibrant whites.

90 Caves Cooperatives de Donnas 2010 Donnas (Valle d'Aosta). This lightly colored, ruby red wine opens with an enticing bouquet of strawberry, rose, flint and a whiff of smoke. The silky palate offers bright notes of red cherry, crushed strawberry, mineral and white pepper. It's elegant and well balanced, with supple tannins and bright acidity. Drink through 2018. Polaner Selections.
abv: 13% **Price:** $25

89 Cave du Vin Blanc de Morgex et de la Salle 2013 Rayon Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle (Valle d'Aosta). Honeysuckle, chamomile, pear and passion fruit aromas meld together in the glass. The palate offers pear, apricot, nectarine zest and a note of tropical fruit alongside brisk acidity. It closes on an almond note. Cream Wine Company.
abv: 12% **Price:** $23

89 Cave du Vin Blanc de Morgex et de la Salle 2013 Tradizionale Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle (Valle d'Aosta). From what are credited as the highest vineyards in Europe, this vibrant, elegant white opens with lovely floral fragrances of honeysuckle, jasmine and Alpine herb. The linear palate delivers yellow apple, citrus, thyme and a hint of mineral alongside brisk acidity. Polaner Selections.
abv: 11.5% **Price:** $20



91 Caven 2008 Inferno al Carmine (Valtellina Superiore). A Nebbiolo from the steep vineyards of Valtellina, this opens with aromas of crushed violet, perfumed berry, flint and a whiff of Alpine herb. The bright palate delivers crushed sour cherry, juicy raspberry, grilled sage, tobacco and a hint of vanilla alongside racy acidity and polished tannins. Enjoy through 2020. Masciarelli Wine Co.
abv: 13% **Price:** $38

91 Nino Negri 2011 5 Stelle Sfursat (Sforzato di Valtellina). Made with dried Nebbiolo grapes and aged in new barriques, this bold wine opens with aromas of baked plum, resin, nutmeg and grilled herb. The warm palate offers mature black cherry, steeped prune, espresso, black pepper, licorice and mint chocolate alongside velvety tannins. You'll also detect the warmth of alcohol on the midpalate, but it doesn't dominate the rich flavors. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.
abv: 16% **Price:** $88

91 Rainoldi 2009 Sassella Riserva (Valtellina Superiore). Aromas of crushed violet, dried rose petal, underbrush, ripe berry and a balsamic note lead the nose on this classically crafted Nebbiolo. The firm palate delivers dried black cherry, raspberry, licorice, clove, mint and tobacco alongside assertive, polished tannins and bright acidity. It's still young, so let this fully develop. Drink 2019–2029. Skurnik Wines, Inc.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $33

VALTELLINA

Cradled among jagged Alpine peaks near the town of Sondrio in the northern region of Lombardy, craggy, nearly impassible Valtellina doesn't seem as if it could possibly be a wine-producing zone.

The subzones of Valtellina's varied territories—Inferno (hell), Sassella (little rock) and Sforzato (forced)—convey the hardships that growers encounter on the rough slopes. Despite the hostile growing conditions, including terraced vineyards chiseled out of rocky mountain faces that climb up to 2,300 feet above sea level, quality wines have been made in this steep valley for centuries.

Today, Valtellina produces Rosso DOC and two DOCG red wines, Valtellina Superiore and Sforzato di Valtellina (also called Sfursat). The wines must contain a minimum of 90 percent Nebbiolo, but most producers use only Nebbiolo for their top offerings.

Valtellina's wines offer different renditions of the temperamental grape, but still deliver bouquets of rose, red berry, truffle and leather—trademarks of the variety.

Valtellina Superiore, which has five subzones—Sassella, Inferno, Grumello, Valgella and Maroggia—is the area's classic wine, fragrant and full of finesse.

"Our Valtellina Superiore is full bodied, but isn't as powerful as Barolo," says Casimiro Maule, winemaker at Nino Negri, one of Valtellina's leading wineries. "Instead, it shows more elegance and more complex aromas, as well as more mineral sensations."

On the other hand, Sforzato, which is made by letting grapes dry naturally for three months before fermentation, "has rich color, more power and longevity, and can stand up to Barolo," Maule says.

The enologist, who has carried out 42 vintages, says the isolated valley has benefited from lower yields and warmer weather conditions.

"The year 2000 was a turning a point," Maule says. "Up until then, we had problems reaching 12 percent alcohol, but since then, our wines naturally attain 13 percent and are overall better balanced than before."

ZUCCARDI
VALLE DE UCO

"Sebastián is making some of the country's most exciting wines by placing a renewed emphasis on terroir and balance. Zuccardi is one fundamental name in the future of Argentine wine."

Robert M. Parker Jr's - The Wine Advocate #212

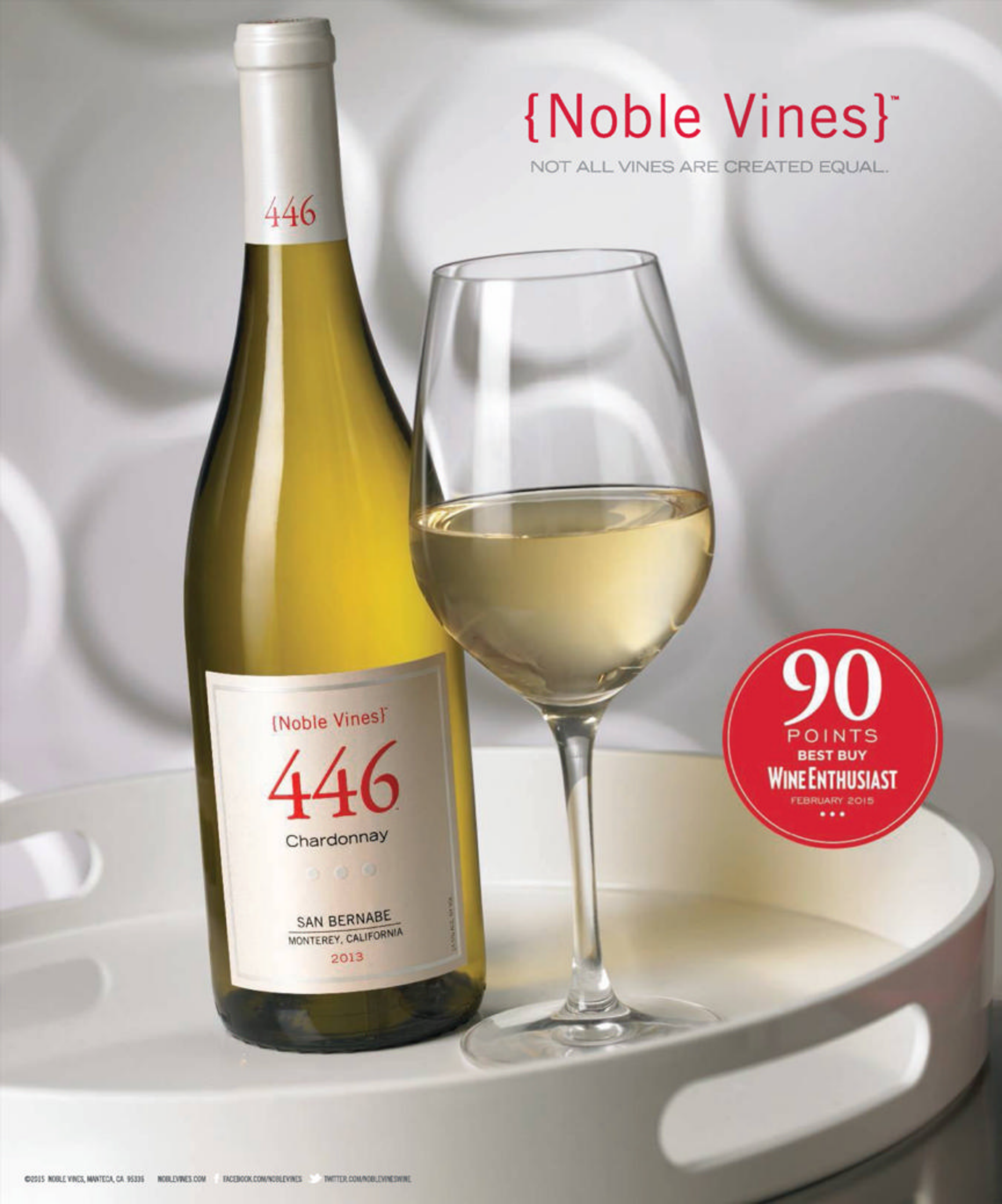


Sebastián Zuccardi, 3rd generation winemaker.
Finca Piedra Infinita, 3600 ft above sea level.
Altamira, Mendoza.

90 PTS Zuccardi Q Malbec 2012
Wine Spectator - Nov2013

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DIXIE DISTILLERS

Meet six spirits producers who bottle Southern sunshine.

BY KARA NEWMAN
PHOTOS BY MARK ANDERSON

The southeastern U.S. is experiencing a boom in new distilleries. While the Kentucky-Tennessee belt has always had its share of whiskey producers, today, distillers around the region have begun cranking out quality in everything from rum to vodka to watermelon brandy.

There's a science-minded master distiller who's changing the way Bourbon is made at a 200-year-old company one experiment at a time, and the Moonshine Mama who uses heirloom corn to make high-end hooch. These are people who embody both the spirits and the soul of the South.



The Experimentalist

Harlen Wheatley
Master Distiller
Buffalo Trace Distillery
Frankfort, Kentucky

"I haven't strayed far from the nest," says Harlen Wheatley, master distiller for 200-year-old Bourbon maker Buffalo Trace. Wheatley was born in Kentucky, earning bachelor degrees in Chemistry from Northern Kentucky University and Chemical Engineering from the University of Kentucky. He joined Buffalo Trace in 1994 and became master distiller in 2005.

Wheatley helped transform the mainstream Buffalo Trace into an experimental wonderland, turning out limited-edition bottlings that collectors clamor to try.

Nearly 25 years ago, Wheatley started the Holy Grail project—literally, a search to create "the world's perfect Bourbon." He experimented with every aspect possible, from the grains that make up the whiskey to the wood used for the barrels.

But perhaps his crowning glory opened in 2014: Warehouse X. It's a sprawling warehouse/laboratory that controls the levels of sunlight, air flow, temperature and humidity—the key variables that affect how Bourbon ages.

It cost more than $1 million to build, and about 20 years of experiments are lined up for Warehouse X, Wheatley estimates.

"We have crazy ideas, and aren't afraid to try them," Wheatley says. "The possibilities for Bourbon here are endless."

Perhaps the craziest idea of all? Wheatley recently introduced an eponymous small-batch wheat vodka that's remarkably soft, with subtle undertones of vanilla. No word yet on whether more vodka experiments are in the works, but it wouldn't be surprising.



The Alt-Artisan

Darek Bell
Owner and Distiller
Corsair Distillery, Nashville and Bowling Green, Kentucky

Pictured with Andrea Clodfelter, head distiller for Corsair's Nashville operations, Nashville native and self-described whiskey geek Darek Bell can't seem to stop experimenting.

Quinoa whiskey? Sure. Red absinthe made with hibiscus? Why not?

Corsair's Triple Smoke Whiskey has been a particular crowd-pleaser. It's a single malt smoked in three separate batches (American cherrywood, German beechwood and Scottish peat) before being blended into an invigoratingly smoky bottling that rivals peated Scotches.

If you want a peek at what's to come in the whiskey world, keep an eye on Bell. His ever-expanding range of seasonal and experimental offerings possess edgy names like Buck Yeah, a buckwheat whiskey, or Insane in the Grain, a 12-grain Bourbon.

After a stint as a television editor at MTV in New York City, Bell returned to Tennessee. He worked in construction while distilling in his garage with co-founder and childhood friend Andrew Webber.

Bell only realized that hooch might be more than a hobby after a chat with an "underground urban moonshiner" from Brooklyn.

"I said, 'I'm from Tennessee, I should be doing that.' "

Bell and Webber launched Corsair in 2008.

Their focus has always been about trying something new, what Bell dubs "alternative whiskeys."

In 2013, he published a book, *Alt Whiskeys: Alternative Whiskeys and Techniques for the Adventurous Distiller*, a cookbook of sorts for aspiring whiskey makers. Bell followed with *Fire Water: Experimental Smoked Whiskeys*, a how-to book focused on smoked spirits.

"We love trying things that are different," Bell says. "Our ethos is, 'If it's been done before, who cares, why do it?' "

In late 2014, Corsair launched its own facility to malt and smoke grain, and the experimentation began from the outset. The wood-smoking options were in part inspired by barbecue champs: hickory, black walnut, sugar maple, cherry and persimmon, to start.

Alternative woods? We would expect nothing less from the king of alt whiskey.

The Pioneering Punster

Rick Wasmund
Founder and Owner
Copper Fox Distillery
Sperryville, Virginia



"Loch Indaal, 5,614 km," reads a sign posted above the malting floor at Copper Fox. The sign points the way to a sea loch on Islay, the Scottish island known for producing spectacularly smoky Scotch whiskies.

The sign appears cryptic until Rick Wasmund, the company's founder and owner, explains the chance encounter with a dram of Scotch that started him on his journey. It's then that you pick up on the puns and dry humor that are part of Wasmund's patter. The Loch Indaal sign is simultaneously funny and wistful.

In 1999, a Johnnie Walker tasting left Wasmund wondering about how to make smoky whiskey in the United States, something no one was doing at the time. He took an internship at Islay Scotch distillery Bowmore, and consulted for long hours with agricultural experts from Virginia Tech on the subject.

By 2005, Wasmund was ready to start making whiskey.

A visit to the distillery reveals the bootstrap nature of the operation. Locally grown grain germinates on the two malting floors, dubbed North and South—the first in-distillery malting floors in the U.S. since Prohibition—housed in the same room.

"At night, they re-enact Civil War battles," Wasmund jokes. "It's a mess in morning."

Instead of peat, whiskies are smoked using local applewood and cherrywood. Some barrels sit on a shelf above the stills, where steam and heat cuts the aging time to a single year, compared to the three to eight years that most American whiskies rest in wood.

As a result, spicy, slightly fruity Wasmund's Single Malt Whisky (he uses the Scottish spelling in homage) doesn't taste quite like a traditional Bourbon, or a Scotch whisky.

"There's not anything you can compare it to," Wasmund says, of both the spirit and the way it was made. "There wasn't anyone to copy, so we had to develop it on our own."

When it comes to his namesake whiskey, Wasmund isn't kidding around.



The History-Minded Locavores

Scott Blackwell and Ann Marshall
Co-owners
High Wire Distilling Co.
Charleston, South Carolina

The newest product from this distillation duo is one that you can't find anywhere else—a small-batch watermelon brandy, made from a 19th-century recipe pieced together from faded newspaper clippings. The key ingredient is the rare heirloom Bradford watermelon. No grapes in this brandy, just watermelon.

This sort of locavore experiment is typical of High Wire, a microdistillery focused on spirits with a distinct sense of Southern terroir. Another example: A rhum agricole-style rum made from locally grown sugarcane, dubbed Lowcountry Agricole. Or New Southern Rivival Bourbon Whiskey, made with four grains, including Carolina Gold rice.

"I didn't want to make another dry gin or Bourbon from bulk grain that we bought from Archer Daniels Midland," says Head Distiller Scott Blackwell, who runs the distillery with his wife and co-owner, Ann Marshall. "That becomes very vanilla, ingredient-wise, for us, and makes our product more homogenized all the way through."

Before taking on the distiller role, Blackwell founded a natural and organic bakery, Immaculate Baking Company, which he later sold to General Mills. His baker's background clearly colors his perception of spirits. He likens one whiskey's flavor to buttermilk biscuits, another to fig-laden molasses cake.

When Blackwell talks, it's easy to become hungry and thirsty at the same time.

When it comes to spirits, he's all about the grain. He goes to great lengths to procure interesting raw materials from local farmers like that Carolina Gold rice, red wheat and Jimmy Red corn. ("It's good for grits," he says.)

While most distillers lean heavily on flavors like caramel, vanilla and spice that are imparted by barrels, it seems fitting that High Wire wants to create "grain-forward spirits."

Says Marshall, "The bedrock of our philosophy is how to bring back the flavors in these nearly lost grains in the land that they are growing on, and bring them to the forefront."



The Southern Gentleman

Phil Prichard
President and Master Distiller
Prichard's Distillery
Nashville and Kelso, Tennessee

Think back to 1996: There were no "craft distilleries" yet. So imagine the leap of faith it must have taken to start the first distillery in Tennessee in almost 50 years. Adding to that, Phil Prichard decided to make rum, deep in the heart of whiskey country.

"The history of rum in America had almost been lost," Prichard says. "I began to look into how rum was made 250 years ago."

He discovered that Colonial Era rum was made differently from the blackstrap molasses-style rums he saw at the local liquor store. Instead, they "were made from a sweet table-grade molasses, like you might put on your pancakes and corn bread. That's what I started to hone in on."

While today's craft distillers benefit from learning from veteran liquor producers, Prichard admits that he backed into the market differently than most. It's common now for spirits makers to sell unaged products while they wait years for the good stuff to mature.

"It never dawned on me to make white rum and sell it," Prichard says. "I set out to make a good rum, so you have to age it. It took me three to four years to see if it was any good."

White rum followed later, as did a line of whiskeys. The latest project: cream liqueurs in decadent flavors like Fudge Brownie and New Orleans Style Praline Cream.

"Maybe I was a pioneer who helped blaze a trail for some of the young distillers, and I'm proud of that," he says. "I helped bring a little bit of interest to the rum category."

So what was it like to be a rum pioneer in the middle of whiskey country?

"It's not good English, but it's one of the funnest things I ever got involved with," Prichard says.



The Moonshine Mama

Troy Ball
Founder and Owner
Asheville Distilling Co.
Asheville, North Carolina

Troy Ball, who calls herself a Dixie chick, has been making white whiskey since 2010. Although moonshine usually refers to the illicit stuff, her hooch, including longer-aged Blonde Whiskey and vanilla-tinged Troy & Sons Oak Reserve bottlings, is entirely legal.

The Troy & Sons selections are named for Ball and her three grown sons, who played a key role in her journey to spirits producer. When the family relocated from Texas to North Carolina, neighbors brought housewarming gifts of homemade moonshine.

"It was terrible," she says.

Finally, a local tipped her off. "The good stuff is kept at home," she was told.

Ball set out to make her own version of "the good stuff." Her first still was a modified pressure cooker.

Moonshine traditionally refers to corn whiskey, and Ball learned that white corn was the key ingredient for making good 'shine. But it was harder to find than she expected.

Eventually, she aligned with seventh-generation farmer John McEntire, who grew an heirloom variety called Crooked Creek Corn, noted for its particularly high fat content.

A second discovery followed: Working with McEntire, Ball constructed a new still made out of whiskey barrels.

"I didn't even know you could do that," Ball says. "[The whiskey] came off the still already oak-flavored."

Ball took the spirit to local sommeliers for feedback, including George Miliotes, then of Darden Restaurants, in Orlando, Florida.

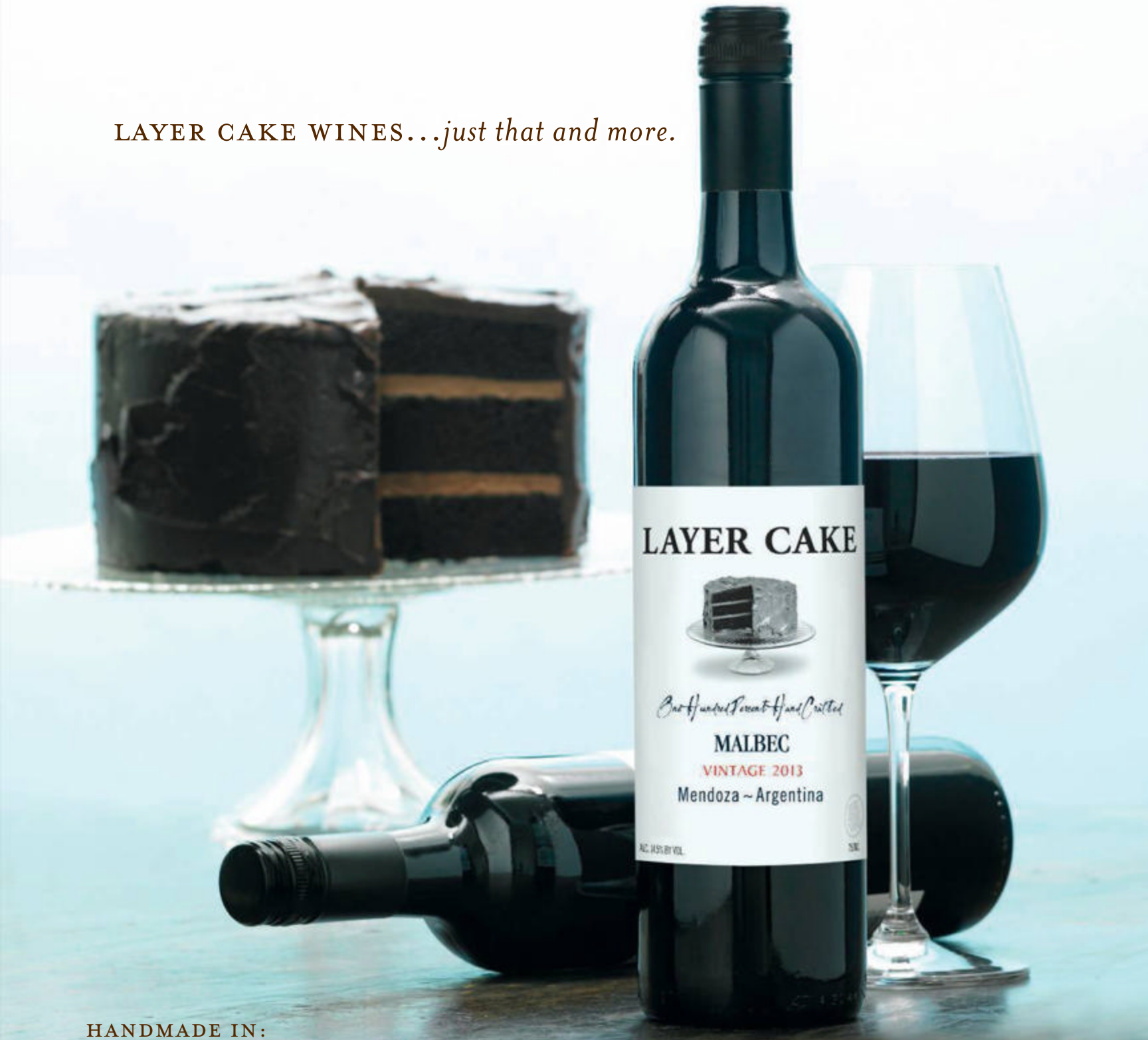
"He said, 'I can't believe the flavors you have in this: apricots and pears,' " Ball says. "I was really pleased."

Within a couple of years, Disney picked up the brand, showcasing a Moonshine Margarita. Made with St-Germain, orange juice and lime juice, it became a top-selling drink at the resort.

Fast-forward to today, and a new windfall has come Ball's way. She's been asked to appear on Discovery's hit reality show *Moonshiners* to demonstrate how legal whiskey is made. They've even given her a nickname: the Moonshine Mama.

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PICNICKING THROUGH PROVENCE

Explore the south of France, either literally or through the region's basket-ready local dishes, paired with refreshing wines.

BY ALEXIS KORMAN & ROGER VOSS

PHOTOS BY BETH GALTON

FOOD AND PROP STYLING: MARIANA VELASQUEZ



AVIGNON

A city simultaneously ancient and modern, Avignon is as famous for its edgy summer arts festival as its formidable Palais des Papes, the largest Gothic palace in the world. This "Palace of the Popes" was built when the Holy See moved its seat of power from Rome to Avignon following an insurrection in 1309. Today, travelers will discover a range of excellent eats, from Michelin-starred fine dining to sidewalk-bistro fare, luxurious hotels and art galleries, and wines from Provence and the nearby Rhône Valley.



La Mirande

WHERE TO STAY

If your budget allows, splurge on a night at **La Mirande.** Built as a cardinal's palace in the 14th century, this 26-room hotel is outfitted with art and antiques spanning centuries of French history (one room houses a collection of porcelain that the hotel claims belonged to Napoleon). Travelers can dine in the fully stocked wine cellar for a private chef's table dinner or simply hit the modern bar for one of about 12 wines by the glass or a classic, impeccably made cocktail.

WHAT TO DO

You'll work up an appetite exploring the city's must-see destinations, including the **Palais des Papes**, Pont Saint-Bénézet (nicknamed the "Bridge to Nowhere") and Rocher des Doms (a park perched above the river), but eating around town is another adventure. Fill up on simple, fresh fare and baked goods like a Maxi Cupcake meant for eight at **O'Petitapetit**. Indulge in coffee and people watching at **Bar Hotel De Ville**. Opposite the town hall, it offers fantastic views of the square and the old-fashioned carousel. Or spring for reservations at **Restaurant Christian Etienne**. Tasting menus that express the chef's creative regional cooking make for a memorable meal, including dishes like a duck burger with sweet onion fondue. Follow dinner with wine at the laid-back **Le Vintage Restaurant Bar a Vin**. Most bottles are under $30. Or opt for a by-the-ounce pour of some 32 local wines via Enomatic Wine Serving Systems at **Le Vin Devant Soi**.

You'll work up an appetite exploring Avignon's must-see destinations, including the Palais des Papes, Pont Saint-Bénézet and Rocher des Doms.

WINES TO DRINK

Vineyards surround the city. To the north is the low, long hill with the stony, strong vines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the most powerful and complex wines from the southern Rhône. Famous estates—Château de Beaucastel, Château Rayas, Domaine de la Janasse—make sumptuous, ageworthy red wines and equally opulent, but mostly short-lived whites. Further north, the varied wines of the Côtes du Rhône spread out across the river's valley. Reds account for 79 percent of production, but look to the region's rosés and rare whites for spring and summer refreshment. To the west, just across the Rhône River, are the small appellations of Lirac, with its readily accessible red wines, and Tavel, known for structured and minerally rosés. Avignon also serves as a gateway to the south, so rosés from the Côtes de Provence make frequent appearances on the local cartes des vins, perfect for warm spring days.





TOP LEFT: JULES SLUTSKY/CAVAN IMAGES/OFFSET



MELON SOUP

Recipe courtesy Chef Laurent Houdart, La Bastide de Marie, Ménerbes

When the weather begins to warm up, the markets of Provence are filled with fresh Cavaillon melons (there's even a local festival named after them). This refreshing soup is easy to make ahead of time. Look for the heaviest melons, as they're the juiciest.

- **2 medium-sized Cavaillon melons (or substitute cantaloupe)**
- **2½ tablespoons sugar**
- **1 cup sparkling wine**
- **4 sprigs of mint, for garnish**

Peel and seed melons, and cut into cubes. In blender or food processor, combine melons with sugar. Add sparkling wine, and process until smooth. Strain through conical sieve and refrigerate until ready to serve. Serve very cold, with sprig of fresh mint for garnish. *Serves 4.*

90 Domaine Houchart 2013 Rosé (Côtes de Provence Sainte Victoire). Montagne Sainte-Victoire has created a microclimate for the vineyards around its base, yielding richer rosés and full-bodied reds. This ripe yet deliciously fruity and fresh wine is full of raspberries, red currants and a refreshing line of acidity that goes well with the sweetness of the melon soup. David Milligan Selections. ***Editors' Choice.***
abv: 13% **Price:** $20

NIÇOISE SALAD

Recipe courtesy Provence Food and Wine: The Art of Living *(Surrey Publishing, 2014) by François Millo and Viktorija Todorovska*

This specialty of Nice has spread throughout Provence, with as many variations as there are home cooks. But certain staples of the recipe—hard-boiled eggs, salt-packed anchovies and black Niçoise olives—give this salad a unique savory note.

- **1 garlic clove, halved**
- **4 cups mesclun**
- **6 small tomatoes, sliced**
- **½ cucumber, sliced**
- **2 celery ribs, thinly sliced**
- **8 radishes, thinly sliced**
- **2 small cubanelle peppers, sliced**
- **3 green onions, sliced**
- **1½ cups freshly shelled fava beans**
- **3 hard-boiled eggs, sliced**
- **6 salt-packed anchovies, washed and chopped**
- **¾ cup black Niçoise olives**
- **Pinch of sea salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil**
- **8 fresh basil leaves, for garnish**

Lightly rub 4 salad plates with garlic, then discard cloves. Divide mesclun among plates and layer with tomatoes, cucumber, celery, radishes, peppers, green onions and fava beans. Top with egg slices, anchovies and olives. Season with salt and pepper, drizzle with olive oil and garnish each plate with 2 basil leaves. *Serves 4.*



90 Château Les Valentines 2013 Rosé (Côtes de Provence). Apart from its romantic name, Les Valentines' rosé and the salty character of the Niçoise salad will work well together. It's brightly fruity and crisp, while showing some good dense flavors. Red fruits push through the citrus and grapefruit acidity to give a full-bodied, ripe wine. Potomac Selections.

abv: 13% **Price:** $25



Villa Baulieu

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

Aix marks the spot for fine food and high culture. Widely considered to be the heart of Provence, this elegant city is known for its stately 17th-century buildings and softly gurgling fountains, ranging from Roman thermal baths to the distinguished Fontaine de la Rotonde. Don't miss the town's outdoor produce markets and *foires aux artisans*, or open-air markets, where artists sell their creations. Painter Paul Cézanne and novelist Émile Zola are two famous former residents of Aix.



Le Zinc d'Hugo

WHERE TO STAY

The sleek 55-room **Hotel Cézanne** is easily the most modern lodging in the city. With a prime location in the center of Aix, guests can explore the town on foot. With two self-service cocktail bars, complimentary in-room drinks and a gym (not easy to find in the region), it caters to a cosmopolitan crowd.

Exquisite décor and luxurious service makes **Villa Baulieu** the top choice if price is no object. About 20 minutes by car from Aix-en-Provence, the property, once the home of the counts of Provence, includes onsite vineyards where tastings can be arranged. Bonus: There's a hot tub perched high atop of one of the towers, boasting stunning views.

WHERE TO EAT

Enjoy a relaxed dinner on the terrace at **La Bastide du Cours** in the heart of Aix. Specialties include Mediterranean tuna tartare, foie gras-stuffed quail and fricassee of shrimp with pastis. The rustic, stone-walled **Le Zinc d'Hugo** in old town Aix serves up regional country cooking like escargot and côte de boeuf, along with a bounty of local wines.

WHAT TO DO

Since so many artists have called Aix home, scope some psychedelic, geometric art at the **Fondation Vasarely**. Opened in the 1970s by Victor Vasarely, a leader of the Optical Art Movement, the museum has a mind-bendingly original collection. If the classics are more your style, walk from the city center to **Atelier Cézanne**. The impressionist's studio is perfectly preserved, showcasing objects that inspired his famous still-life paintings, including bowls of fruit, olives and, yes, wine bottles.

WINES TO DRINK

While rosés—richer and more full-bodied than those further east in the Côtes de Provence—dominate the hilly Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence vineyards to the north of Aix. The area also produces some serious, age-worthy reds. At the heart of the region sits the tiny 100-acre appellation of Palette and the iconic estate of Château Simone. Sixteen white grapes and 15 red are allowed in the appellation, making this the most varied of any French region. Surrounding this core, look for the Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence red wines of Château de Calavon, Château Vignelaure and Domaine d'Eole. They have southern spice as well as rich black-fruit notes complemented by wood aging. At some estates, Cabernet Sauvignon gives structure to the blend. The smaller quantities of white wines are exotic, packed with yellow fruits and almonds, rich in flavor and alcohol.

LES BAUX-DE-PROVENCE



FILLING THE BASKET

Pack your picnic hamper with these Provençal accouterments.

- *Calissons*, marzipan-like confections, are typically shaped like almonds and can be found at gourmet grocers.
- Pick up a jar of tapenade, or make your own spread of olives, capers and extra-virgin olive oil. Eat with bread, grilled vegetables, fish or meat.
- Bring along sliced ripe tomatoes and peppers, sprinkle liberally with sea salt and drizzle with Provençal olive oil.
- For dessert, serve sliced figs or a *tarte aux pignons* (pine nut tart).

The spectacular, fortified mountaintop village of Les Baux-de-Provence has extraordinary views in every direction, right down to the Mediterranean. Restaurants, museums and shops that sell a fine mix of local crafts and souvenirs line the single street that goes up to the ruined castle. The region was ruled by the Baux House until the 15th century before it joined the French crown.

In 1642, it was granted as a French marquisate to Monaco's Grimaldi family. The title of Marquis of Baux resides with the heir to the throne of Monaco, currently Jacques Honoré Rainier. Les Baux is a tourist magnet in the summer, but visit in early spring and late fall for more privacy.

The wine circuit covers 12 wineries within the Les Baux-de-Provence appellation, producing red and rosé wines. Vines run down the slopes of the mountains and into the valley. All of the wineries also make crisp, green olive oil and some, like Mas de la Dame (a *mas* is a farm), have attractive shops. *Lesvinsdesbaux.com* lists the local producers.

WHERE TO STAY

Down in the valley are a range of impressive hotels and restaurants. The most memorable are Michelin-starred Relais & Chateaux's **L'Oustau de Baumanière**, a destination for luxurious pampering nestled in the mountains, and the small cliff-side bijou **Le Mas d'Aigret**.

WHERE TO EAT

One of the area's best dining experiences is in the nearby village of Paradou. At **Le Bistro de Paradou**, ultrafresh cuisine that incorporates local ingredients is served in a simple setting.

WHAT TO DO

After lunch, what better than a movie? Visit the caves of the **Carrières de Lumières**, just down the hill from Les Baux, to see projections of great French and European art on vast rock faces.

There's more art associated with the region in the village of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, just on the north side of the Alpilles ("Little Alps"), in the Alpilles Natural Regional Park. It was the birthplace of French apothecary and seer Nostradamus and served as home to Vincent van Gogh for a period, where he was inspired by the hills of the Alpilles. Today, the town is an artists' colony, an attractive tree-lined, sun-drenched Provençal village to wander.



Carrières de Lumières

WINES TO DRINK

Here, wine styles differ from the surrounding countryside. Inside the circle of mountains that make up the Alpilles are the vines of Les Baux-de-Provence. The dry climate and the isolation of the vines allow producers to grow their grapes biodynamically, now a requirement of the appellation. The wines are surprisingly elegant and structured, considering the hot climate of the vineyards, with estates like Mas de la Dame, Mas de Gourgonnier and Domaine de La Vallongue setting the standard. Firmly tannic when young, many of these wines—typically blends of Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah, but sometimes including Carignan, Counoise, Cinsault and Cabernet Sauvignon—benefit from up to 10 years of cellaring.



Evoke the essence of Provence by pouring a glass of local rosé and serving marinated chèvre on slices of fresh-baked bread.

CHÈVRE MARINADE

Recipe courtesy Chef Laurent Houdart, La Bastide de Marie, Ménerbes

Few other wine and food combinations evoke the essence of Provence like a glass of local rosé and marinated chèvre slathered on toasted slices of fragrant, fresh-baked bread. A loaf studded with herbs or figs closely replicates the experience.

- **1 garlic clove, peeled**
- **1 sprig thyme**
- **1 bay leaf**
- **1 sprig rosemary**
- **10 ounces young chèvre (soft goat cheese)**
- **Provençal olive oil, to cover**

Place garlic, thyme, bay leaf and rosemary in a clean 16-ounce jar. Cut cheese in half, and add to jar. Cover with olive oil, seal with lid and marinate refrigerated for 1 week. To serve, spread on slices of toasted bread. *Serves 4.*

91 Château Roubine 2013 Rosé (Côtes de Provence). This is a classic Provence rosé that goes with everything, but especially tangy food like unpasteurized goat cheese. Packed with red fruits, it shows structure and concentration. A mineral texture brings out the freshness of the fruit, while also giving complexity.

BANDOL & CASSIS



With a dramatic, mountainous backdrop, the two small resorts of Bandol and Cassis are a world apart from the luxury image of the French Riviera. Close to Marseille, they share the same authentic, rough-edged feel. While their main business is tourism, fishing ports and small-scale hotels and restaurants offer authenticity: These are French, not international, destinations.

Bandol is the larger town, with a small center and an extended boulevard along the seafront. Protected by two headlands, its beaches are calm and sandy, although just beyond, the sea is brisk enough to welcome water sports. The vineyards are across the first range of hills from the sea and in the narrow valleys beyond. Bandol's wine capital is La Cadière d'Azur, a medieval hilltop village, 10 minutes from Bandol by car. There are wine information centers just outside the village and on the waterfront.

The small vineyard area of Cassis is close to the water, full of magical views. The best estate to visit is Clos Sainte Magdeleine, just outside the town. The Maison des Vins is on the main (and only) road, just before it reaches the town. The town itself is small and centered on the harbor. From here, small boats make daily visits to the dramatic *calanques*, steep-sided inlets where the cliffs sweep into the water.

Small boats make daily visits to the dramatic *calanques*, steep-sided inlets where the cliffs sweep into the water.

WHERE TO STAY

The modern five-star **Île Russe Bandol** has eclectic furnishings and a thalassotherapy (seawater) spa by the port of Bandol. The hotel has a beach restaurant, La Goélette, open seasonally (April–September).

For a cozy, quiet escape, the **Hotel Plein Large** in Bandol is separated from the beach by only a path. The 10 simply furnished bedrooms face the sea, and seven of them feature balconies.

WHERE TO EAT

In the heart of the old town of Bandol, the tiny **L'Atelier du Goût** is distinctive for its white-washed walls and modern cuisine. For flashy décor and equally ostentatious cuisine, try **Les Gourmands Disent**, by the church in the center of Bandol. Cassis's **La Villa Madie**, named a two-star Michelin restaurant in February, has stellar sea views from the terrace.

WINES TO DRINK

There can be no greater contrast in French wine than the powerful reds of Bandol and the seafood-friendly, light whites of neighboring Cassis. The coastal range of mountains dominates both appellations, along with the influence of the Mediterranean Sea.

In Bandol, warmth from the sea and the long sun exposure of the hillside vineyards allow Mourvèdre to thrive. Top red Bandol wines, like Domaine Tempier, La Bastide Blanche and Domaine de la Bégude, with their notes of herbs and spices, and initially lean, tannic structures, are the most long-lived wines in Provence. Rosés are rich, yet the Mourvèdre in the blend yields structured and concentrated wines that, unusually for rosés, can age several years.

With spectacular vineyards that line the cliff tops, the small fishing village of Cassis is a picture-perfect place to both make and drink the light, bright whites that pair so well with the daily catch. It's rare to find Cassis away from home: With less than one million bottles produced, there's hardly enough to go around for the thirsty locals and visitors.



La Villa Madie

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BLACK OLIVE AND HERB FOUGASSE

Recipe courtesy Domaine des Peyre, Robion

A specialty of this luxurious art-focused hotel in Robion (located 18 miles from Avignon), and extremely popular throughout Provence, *fougasse* is often stuffed with the bounty of the region: Think aromatic herbs, cured olives, ripe tomatoes and peppers, or whatever else may in season. The rich bread feels like a meal itself.

- **2 teaspoons baker's yeast**
- **½ pound flour**
- **2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus additional for brushing**
- **1 tablespoon sea salt**
- **30 pitted black olives, like Niçoise**
- **2 tablespoons chopped thyme or rosemary**

Preheat oven to 355°F. Dissolve yeast in ¼ cup warm water. Stir and let stand 30 minutes at room temperature.

In a bowl, mix flour with 2½ ounces of water, the yeast mixture, olive oil, salt and olives. Add another 2½ ounces of warm water to mixture gradually, stirring to create a smooth ball. Knead dough by hand or with mixer for 15 minutes.

In a lightly greased bowl, cover dough ball with clean, wet towel to allow to rise. Let stand at room temperature for 2 hours.

Place parchment paper on baking sheet. Knead dough lightly, spreading it to make oval shape with your finger. With knife, score dough 3 times in the middle. Brush lightly with oil and sprinkle with chopped herbs. Bake for 25 minutes. Set aside to cool before slicing. *Serves 4.*



90 La Bastide Blanche 2012 Blanc (Bandol). With the concentrated flavor of olives, you need a full-bodied wine to pair with this dish. This rich white from one of the top Bandol producers is rich and creamy, with an abundance of fruit flavors. Notes of white pear and apricot are portrayed in this ripe and warm-feeling wine. The acidity and mandarin zest notes provide crispness and structure. Weygandt-Metzler.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** $25

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by Gérard Bertrand



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MAY 2015



Sangiovese Grosso grapes on Biondi Santi's Il Greppo estate in Montalcino

MICK ROCK/CEPHAS

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Reviews of wines from Rioja, Ribera del Duero, Jumilla and more.

BOLD TUSCAN BEAUTIES
Additional reviews of Brunello di Montalcino, plus stunning selections from Bolgheri, Maremma and more.

FOR ADDITIONAL RATINGS AND REVIEWS, VISIT *BUYINGGUIDE.WINEMAG.COM*

TUSCANY

The 2010 Brunello di Montalcinos are mostly must-buys

Following the success of the 2010 vintage in Barolo and Barbaresco, as well as Bolgheri and Chianti Classico, all eyes are now focused on Brunello di Montalcino.

So, are these wines living up to the hype? Yes and no.

It's challenging to generalize on any vintage in Montalcino because of its diverse growing conditions. Vineyard altitudes range from 320 to 1,969 feet above sea level, and average summer temperatures and rainfall vary significantly from north to south.

Yet, according to producers in all corners of the denomination, 2010 was a remarkable year in terms of weather.

"It was a perfect growing season, relatively warm during the maturation phase, with pronounced day and night temperature changes that allowed us to wait for the best phenolic maturation ever attained at our estate," says Francesco Ripaccioli of Canalicchio di Sopra and vice president of the *consorzio*. Ripaccioli even calls the vintage, "historic."

Thanks to these ideal growing conditions, superb 2010 Brunellos display rich fruit flavors, freshness and powerful tannins. The best have the structure to age for at least 15–20 years, yet their concentrated, juicy flavors also make them approachable in a few years, once the tannins start to soften.

Thanks to these ideal growing conditions, superb 2010 Brunellos display rich fruit flavors, freshness and powerful tannins.

Perfect weather conditions don't guarantee vintage excellence across the board, and there were a decent number of wines that underperformed this year despite the ideal conditions. However, the top producers—those who make the best Brunellos every year—generally made fantastic 2010 Brunellos.

Elsewhere in this issue's Buying Guide, we review the latest releases from Bordeaux and Spain, as well as New World selections from Argentina, California, Washington, Idaho and New York. And, as always, be sure to check out our complete database, with thousands more reviews, at *buyingguide.winemag.com*.

Cheers! —Kerin O'Keefe

2010 BRUNELLO

99 Il Marroneto 2010 Madonna delle Grazie (Brunello di Montalcino). For full review see page 93. ***Cellar Selection***.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $110

97 Il Marroneto 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Multifaceted fragrances suggest violet, rose, red berry, baking spice, savory herb and a balsamic note. Elegant with great intensity, the radiant palate delivers juicy wild cherry, crushed berry, cinnamon and a note of star anise alongside a backbone of assertive, fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. It's a gorgeous wine with breeding and class that needs time to bloom fully. Drink 2020–2035. Montcalm Wine Importers. ***Cellar Selection***. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $75

96 Biondi Santi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. This radiant wine is loaded with finesse, opening with an alluring fragrance of rose, violet and a whiff of pressed powder. The firm, linear palate offers bright cherry, crushed red berry, white pepper and a hint of tobacco alongside a backbone of fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. It's impeccably balanced but youthfully austere and needs to open up. Drink 2020–2035. Vision Wine & Spirits. ***Cellar Selection***. —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $180

96 Conti Costanti 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of menthol, leather, pressed violet, forest floor and woodland berry lead off this intense Brunello. The firm, delicious palate offers dried red cherry, crushed raspberry, ground white pepper and licorice alongside a backbone of assertive but fine-grained tannins and racy acidity. It's impeccably balanced and elegant but still young, so give it time to develop to its full potential. Drink 2020–2035. Empson USA Ltd. ***Cellar Selection***. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $84

96 Fuligni 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. This opens with aromas of blue flower, red berry, menthol and baking spice. The delicious palate delivers juicy red cherry, crushed plum, cinnamon, white pepper and mineral. Impeccably balanced with polished tannins and freshness, it impresses for its combination of intensity and elegance. Drink 2018–2028. Empson USA Ltd. ***Cellar Selection***. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $86

95 Canalicchio di Sopra 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of dark berry, mint, savory herb, blue flower and a balsamic note lead the nose. On the concentrated palate, notes of white pepper, cinnamon, clove, licorice and tobacco add depth to the black cherry core. Youthfully austere but fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity support the juicy flavors. Give this time to open and develop complexity. Vinifera Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $70

95 Canalicchio Franco Pacenti 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Violet, rose, pressed powder, perfumed berry and forest floor are some of the aromas offered by this stunning wine. The palate is still tightly wound, but delivers juicy black cherry, white pepper and licorice alongside youthfully assertive but fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Drink 2018–2030. Superior Wines. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $80

95 Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona 2010 Pianrosso (Brunello di Montalcino). Enticing aromas of blue flower, ripe berry, pressed powder and Mediterranean herb float from the glass. The firm palate shows great intensity, delivering layers of black cherry, dark cooking spice and licorice alongside youthfully austere tannins. It's still young and tightly knit so give it time to unwind and develop complexity. Drink 2020–2030. Indigenous Selections. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $80

95 Molino di Sant'Antimo 2010 Varco (Brunello di Montalcino). Earthy aromas suggest leather, game, ripe dark berry and grilled herb. The palate shows great intensity, with black and red cherry, cinnamon, Mediterranean herb and star anise alongside bracing but refined tannins. It's well balanced and bursting with vitality. Drink 2017–2028. Massanois Imports. ***Editors' Choice***. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $48

95 Sesti 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. This pure expression of Sangiovese opens with aromas of rose petal, leather, game, Mediterranean herb and wild berry. The vibrant, full-bodied palate delivers layers of crushed Morello cherry, raspberry, cinnamon and grilled herb alongside firm, polished

Continued on page 103

The Wine Enthusiast
Buying Guide

The Buying Guide includes ratings and reviews of new-release and selected older beverage alcohol products evaluated by *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*'s editors and other qualified tasters. Regular contributors to our Buying Guide include Tasting Director/Senior Editor Lauren Buzzeo, Executive Editor Susan Kostrzewa, Managing Editor Joe Czerwinski, Assistant Tasting Director Alexander Peartree, Contributing Editors Michael Schachner, Anna Lee C. Iijima, Mike DeSimone, Jeff Jenssen and Spirits Editor Kara Newman in New York; European Editor Roger Voss in France; Italian Editor Kerin O'Keefe in Switzerland; Contributing Editor Anne Krebiehl in England; Contributing Editors Virginie Boone, Jim Gordon and Matt Kettmann in California; and Contributing Editors Paul Gregutt and Sean Sullivan in Washington.

If a wine was evaluated by a single reviewer, that taster's initials appear following the note. When no initials appear following a wine review, the wine was evaluated by two or more reviewers and the score and tasting note reflect the input of all tasters. Unless otherwise stated, all spirit reviews are by Kara Newman and all beer reviews are by Lauren Buzzeo.

Each review contains a score, the full name of the product, its suggested national retail price, its alcohol (abv) as reported to us by the submitter and a tasting note. If price or alcohol content cannot be confirmed, NA (not available) will be printed. Prices are for 750-ml bottles unless otherwise indicated.

TASTING METHODOLOGY AND GOALS

All tastings reported in the Buying Guide are performed blind. Typically, products are tasted in peer-group flights of from 5–8 samples. Reviewers may know general information about a flight to provide context—vintage, variety or appellation—but never the producer or retail price of any given selection. When possible, products considered flawed or uncustomary are retasted.

ABOUT THE SCORES

Ratings reflect what our editors felt about a particular product. Beyond the rating, we encourage you to read the accompanying tasting note to learn about a product's special characteristics.

Classic 98–100:	The pinnacle of quality.
Superb 94–97:	A great achievement.
Excellent 90–93:	Highly recommended.
Very Good 87–89:	Often good value; well recommended.
Good 83–86:	Suitable for everyday consumption; often good value.
Acceptable 80–82:	Can be employed in casual, less-critical circumstances.

Products deemed Unacceptable (receiving a rating below 80 points) are not reviewed.

SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Editors' Choice products are those that offer excellent quality at a price above our Best Buy range, or a product at any price with unique qualities that merit special attention.

Cellar Selections are products deemed highly collectible and/or requiring time in a temperature-controlled wine cellar to reach their maximum potential. A Cellar Selection designation does not mean that a product must be stored to be enjoyed, but that cellaring will probably result in a more enjoyable bottle. In general, an optimum time for cellaring will be indicated.

Best Buys are products that offer a high level of quality in relation to price. There are no specific guidelines or formulae for determining Best Buys, but wines meriting this award are generally priced at $15 or less.

SUBMITTING PRODUCTS FOR REVIEW

Products should be submitted to the appropriate reviewing location as detailed in our FAQ, available online via *winemag.com/contactus*. Inquiries should be addressed to the Tasting & Review Department at 914.345.9463 or email *tastings@wineenthusiast.net*. **There is no charge for submitting products**. We make every effort to taste all products submitted for review, but there is no guarantee that all products submitted will be tasted, or that reviews will appear in the magazine. All samples must be accompanied by the appropriate submission forms, which may be downloaded from our Web site.

LABELS

Labels are paid promotions. Producers and importers are given the opportunity to submit labels, which are reproduced and printed along with tasting notes and scores. For information on label purchases, contact Denise Valenza at 813.571.1122; fax 866.896.8786; or email *dvalenza@wineenthusiast.net*.

Find all reviews on our fully searchable database at *buyingguide.winemag.com*



99 Il Marroneto 2010 Madonna delle Grazie (Brunello di Montalcino). Beautiful aromas of violet, rose, pressed powder, perfumed berry and refreshing mint mingle in the glass. The focused palate boasts power and finesse, and delivers a great depth of flavors including ripe black cherry, licorice, tobacco and mineral. It's still young, with youthfully austere tannins and bright acidity, but this has the fruit richness and structure for lengthy aging. Hold for complexity; drink 2020–2040. Montcalm Wine Importers. ***Cellar Selection***. —K.O.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** $110



96 Dutton-Goldfield 2012 Devil's Gulch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Marin County). Gorgeous aromas of clove, cinnamon, ripe black fruit and whiffs of pine and herb make a great start. The flavors are equally compelling and classic, blending cinnamon and black cherry with hints of rosemary and rhubarb. These all glide on a soothing texture that rests lightly on firm tannins and fresh acidity, resulting in a fascinating and complex taste experience. ***Editors' Choice***. —J.G.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** $68



96 Joseph Phelps 2011 Insignia Estate Grown Red Wine (Napa Valley). Impeccable elegance characterizes this vintage of the producer's marquee Bordeaux-style blend, an expert finessing of 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Petit Verdot, 4% Malbec, 2% Merlot and 1% Cabernet Franc. Juicy in exotic black fruit, it stands tall, with silky, towering shoulders of herb, cardamom and clove that will coalesce beautifully over time. Hold through 2026. ***Cellar Selection***. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** $225



95 Carlisle 2012 The Derivative White Wine (Sonoma County). This unusual blend combines old-vine Sémillon from the Monte Rosso Vineyard with Muscadelle and Palomino. Voluptuous on the nose, the wine is restrained on the palate, with inviting layers of licorice, beeswax and stone fruit. Exotic and long lasting, it's an intriguing wine. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** $34



95 San Vicente 2010 Rioja. Cedary aromas of fresh-cut wood blend perfectly into core scents of plum, wild berry and mellow herb. This modern-style Rioja offers a refined, full-bodied palate. Oak-rich flavors of cherry and berry hint at the exotic, with resin and pepper notes preceding a spicy, woody, rugged finish. The wine needs a few more years; drink 2016–2028. Fine Estates From Spain. ***Editors' Choice***. —M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** $58



94 Byron 2012 Monument Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). The winery's top-end bottling, this presents rich aromas of black cherry and blackberry pie, with sweet hickory smoke, pipe tobacco and graphite shavings. The expertly balanced palate is quite broad, with ripe pomegranate and raspberry fruit, yet it's not jammy at all, thanks to black clove, Earl Grey tea and violet candy. Ample tannins and acidity enliven the mouth. —M.K.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** $60



94 Center of Effort 2012 Chardonnay (Edna Valley). This phenomenal bottling from the winemaking team of Mike Sinor and Nathan Carlson hits the nose with a judicious touch of vanilla-laced buttercream as well as scorched lemon slices and orange peels. It's playfully lithe on the palate, with just a touch of oak warmth, racy acidity, chalky grip and a faint hint of dill. It's great for now, but will age with nutty style thanks to the balancing tensions. ***Editors' Choice***. —M.K.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $30



94 Col d'Orcia 2007 Poggio al Vento Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino). Crushed berry, leather, scorched earth, carob and underbrush are just some of the aromas offered by this powerfully structured Brunello. The ripe, warm palate delivers layers of juicy black cherry, black raspberry, tobacco, clove and grilled herb alongside firm, chewy tannins. Drink 2017–2027. Palm Bay International. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $150



94 Far Niente 2012 Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). Gentle on the front palate, this gorgeously rendered Cabernet Sauvignon, with smatterings of Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc, develops weight and body as it goes, while retaining classic restraint. Cherry and cassis counterpoise layers of toasty oak, cedar and silky tannins, finishing balanced. —V.B.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $145



94 Gary Farrell 2012 Hallberg Vineyard Clone 777 Oak Tank Fermented 17% Whole Cluster Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). This wine delivers in flavor and aroma, a refined layering of cherry and strawberry that celebrates what this aromatic clone can do in Russian River Valley. Orange peel and tart, tight acidity combine around a silky texture, with a ginger-spice finish and lingering hint of rose petal. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $65



94 Gary Farrell 2012 Rochioli Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). The producer continues to hit it out of the park with this vintage of Pinot, offering a gorgeously balanced interpretation of a marquee vineyard site. Rose petal and lavender aromas evolve into flavors of rosemary, high-toned orange peel, dried cherry and cranberry on the palate, keeping things ethereal throughout. Smooth and medium bodied, the tannins are coy and the entire experience memorable. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** $70



94 Giornata 2012 Luna Matta Vineyard Aglianico (Paso Robles). Brian and Stephanie Terrizzi's studies of this black grape are fascinating. This shows a very distinct nose of purple fruit meeting charred wood, with elderberry jam, dried violet, scarlet rose and truffle elements. It's meaty, with soy, teriyaki and prime rib flavors on the palate, yet also ripe, with plum jam and toasted sage accents. The strong but not overpowering tannins ensure great drinking from 2017–2025. ***Cellar Selection***. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $35



94 Guarachi Family 2013 Sun Chase Vineyard Petaluma Gap Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). The producer has chosen to highlight the Petaluma Gap region within the larger Sonoma Coast appellation on this wine, a nod to its recent purchase of the well-regarded Sun Chase Vineyard as well as an endorsement of the Gap becoming an appellation of its own one day. This Pinot might help matters, a beautifully floral mix of rose petal and violet on the nose followed intricately by juicy, subtle red fruit and buoyant acidity. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $75



94 Muga 2010 Selección Especial (Rioja). Tight as a drum on the nose, this rambunctious Rioja is throbbing with blackberry, plum and floral aromas. Intense and staunch on the palate, with plum, raspberry, cherry, herb and chocolate flavors, this runs long on the finish, with power and acidity to spare. Hold until 2017, then drink through 2035. Fine Estates From Spain. ***Cellar Selection***. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $43



94 Nickel & Nickel 2012 State Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon (Yountville). There's a velvety silkiness to this 100% Cabernet Sauvignon as well as a lushness to the palate that will please aficionados of both Cabernet and Pinot Noir. Refined tannins stand out in subtle ways, as do high-toned cassis and blackberry. Though the wine displays a richness of oak and chocolate, the minerality truly shines here. This will cellar well through 2025. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $100



94 Viñedos de Paganos 2010 El Puntido (Rioja). This is ripe and pure on the nose, with aromas of raisin, cherry and earth. The palate is full but not heavy, while flavors of cherry and blackberry run deep in front of a second wave of pepper and spice. Only on the finish does overt oak show up, so give this a few years and drink from 2016 through 2022. Fine Estates From Spain. ***Cellar Selection***. —M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** $58



93 Byron 2012 Julia's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). There's an amazing array of fruit on the nose, from the deep richness of blackberry to the tartness of cranberry, all set against wet-slate minerality and dashes of clove cigarettes, soy sauce and white pepper. It proves light and airy on the well-balanced palate, with dark fruit, sandalwood spice and the right amount of acidity and tannins to finish clean. —M.K.

abv: 13.9% **Price:** $45



93 Caparzo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Lovely fragrances of pressed powder, black berries, rose and tilled soil waft from the glass. The firm palate offers wild cherry, raspberry, cinnamon, licorice and savory herb alongside tightly knit but refined tannins. Fresh acidity balances this out but it's still young and not fully developed. Drink 2020–2030. Vineyard Brands. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** $45



93 Gary Farrell 2012 Rochioli-Allen Vineyards Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). This wine needs some coaxing at first to come out of its shell. Once settled, it entices in warming cardamom, clove and damp earth, taking on savory airs. Exuberant as it develops, it offers high-toned cherry and tangerine that surround a silky, subtle body. Hints of spicy cinnamon and white pepper mark the finish. —V.B.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** $70



93 Nickel & Nickel 2012 C.C. Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford). Gingerbread and graham cracker provide this 100% Cabernet Sauvignon with a distinct warmth of character. Elegant, light and restrained, it opens with a prominent rose aroma. It then offers cherry and raspberry delicacy around subtle French oak and vanilla on the palate, all lingering long though the finish. —V.B.

abv: 14.4% **Price:** $100



93 Passing Time 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Horse Heaven Hills). This inaugural release from former NFL quarterbacks Dan Marino and Damon Huard is a blend of 86% Discovery Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Klipsun Merlot and 5% Champoux Cabernet Franc. It's aromatically brooding at kickoff, with notes of dark coffee, dusty earth and cherry. The soft, smooth cherry and coffee flavors will benefit from additional time in the bottle, as this wine is more about elegance than sheer power. Give it until 2025–2030 to see it at its best; it has the stuffing to get there. ***Cellar Selection***. —S.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** $75



93 Rochioli 2013 Estate Grown Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). Richly caramelized on the nose, the seductive quality of this wine continues on the palate, pushing the boundaries of baked apple and voluptuous body without ever careening over the edge. A classic California Chardonnay from a structured, balanced vintage, it finishes with intriguing minerality. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50



93 Smith-Madrone 2013 Estate Bottled Riesling (Spring Mountain). From 41-year-old vines on just over five estate acres, this is resiny and briny on the nose. A honey-laced creaminess at the core is tensely accentuated by vibrant acidity. Balanced and elegant, with a sunny bite of ripeness, it revels in nuances of fresh and dried apricot while lighter notes of lemon, lime and grapefruit play backup. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.

abv: 12.6% **Price:** $27

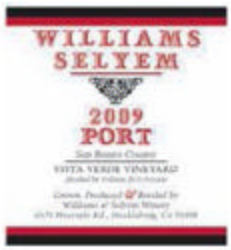


93 Tanner DaFoe 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Ynez Valley). This luxury-level project by Jeff Tanner and Rob DaFoe delivers aromas of rich blackberry jam nuanced with wet tobacco, loam, tomato leaf and a touch of spearmint. Blackberries and blueberries also line the edges of the palate, but the core is all about spicy tobacco and black pepper. There's lot of acidity four years in, so this will stand the test of time in the cellar. Drink 2017 through 2028. ***Cellar Selection***. —M.K.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** $110



93 Three Sticks 2012 Durell Vineyard Chardonnay (Sonoma Valley). Consistency of richness and caramel toastiness characterizes this wine year in and year out. This vintage exudes both the full-bodied style embraced by the producer as well as the voluptuously ripe and wholesome fruit that comes off of the vineyard in a year like 2012. Dark gold in color, it offers salty, savory accents around a core of lemon-specked minerality. Surreal and effete, it finishes with flair. —V.B.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $50



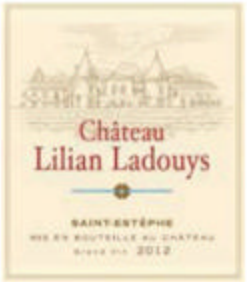
93 Williams Selyem 2009 Vista Verde Vineyard Port (San Benito County). Dark and viscous, this greets the nose with expected aromas of raisin and prune, but rises above with nutmeg, cardamom, clove and sleek graphite notes. The first impression on the palate is sweet plum nectar, but the grippy tannins prove seductive and the ripping acidity keeps it quaffable. The fascinating finish is all about chocolate-covered nuts. —M.K.
abv: 20% **Price:** $40



92 Bodegas Dios Baco S.L. NV Oxford 1.970 Pedro Ximénez Sherry. With a color akin to motor oil, this lush PX Sherry smells of golden and black raisins, caramel and kumquat. In terms of feel, it's unctuous up front, but ideally balanced on the back palate. Caramel, raisin and brown sugar flavors finish long, sticky and complex. It's hard not to love this. CIV/USA. —M.S.
abv: 17% **Price:** $18/500 ml



92 Bridlewood 2012 Reserve Chardonnay (Santa Lucia Highlands). Aromas of warm brioche, apple scone and cream laced with singed lemon draw the nose deep into this wine. Broad, approachable flavors of apple and pear are leveled by a line of Meyer lemon acidity and chalky minerality throughout. It's very welcoming and bright. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $40



92 Château Lilian Ladouys 2012 Saint-Estèphe. Always a structured wine, this vintage selection has dense fruit flavors and a scented, smoky character. It's full of fruit and structured tannin, with ample acidity and excellent cellaring potential. It's a complex wine that will age well; drink after 2018. Misa Imports. ***Cellar Selection.*** —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $35



92 Guado al Tasso 2012 Bolgheri Superiore. Made with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and a drop of Petit Verdot, this structured red opens with aromas of exotic spice, pressed flower, dark berry and graphite. The concentrated palate offers black cherry, crushed plum, espresso and licorice. Round, smooth tannins balance the rich flavors. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $102



92 La Mannella 2010 I Poggiarelli (Brunello di Montalcino). Menthol, mint, sage, dark berry and rose aromas come with a balsamic note. Firm, fine-grained tannins support concentrated black cherry, crushed plum, mocha, vanilla and licorice flavors. Drink through 2022. Quintessential Wines. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $95



92 Mesa Del Sol 2009 Syrah (Arroyo Seco). The aging program for this Syrah, which comes from a vineyard near the intersection of the Carmel and Salinas valleys, results in a solidly balanced wine. Pepper, boysenberry and game consume the nose, with blackberry fruit, mint, tobacco and a greenish bitterness keeping the palate interesting. —M.K.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $29



92 Presqu'ile 2012 Steiner Creek Vineyard Pinot Noir (San Luis Obispo County). Coming from an extreme coastal vineyard three miles north of Cambria, this cool-climate study offers aromas of blistered cherry tomatoes, Eastern European goulash spices and crushed peppercorns of all colors. It's fresh and lively on the palate, with hints of rose and tart raspberry. At the same time, it's quite vegetal, with green notes that will evolve into more balanced umami flavors from 2017 to 2022. ***Cellar Selection.*** —M.K.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** $48



92 Sante Arcangeli 2013 Split Rail Vineyard Chardonnay (Santa Cruz Mountains). From a vineyard 1,700 feet above the small town of Corralitos comes this tasty wine that begins with aromas of smoked apple, lemon zest, honeysuckle and sea salt, as well as a struck-match element. The palate shows flavors of fresh apple, chamomile and a dusting of crushed vanilla, all set against a chalky grip. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $30



92 Tangent 2013 Paragon Vineyard Pinot Gris (Edna Valley). Extremely pungent on the nose, this is quite restrained and balanced on the palate. Aromas of Key lime pie, lemon sorbet and tart passion fruit give way to steely flavors of lemon juice and lime peel, all encased in strong, fresh, lively and fun acidity. —M.K.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $17



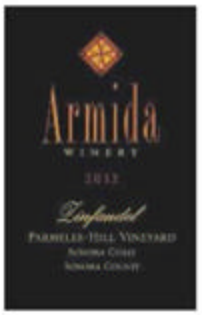
92 Tanner DaFoe 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Ynez Valley). Jeff Tanner and Rob DaFoe's luxury-level wines need time to emerge, but this is already showing delicious cherry, blackberry and blueberry pie on the nose, elevated with sweet black sage. It's supple on the palate at first, with black cherry, currant, licorice and pencil lead, yet the strong acidity and thick tannins ensure better drinking from 2018–2031. ***Cellar Selection***. —M.K.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $110



92 Terlato 2012 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Ethereal layers of baked strawberry invite one in to this wine, a lightly colored celebration of rose, damp earth and herb. Framed around a compact structure, the wine is airy and bright, with subtle oak and a medium body. The finish is long and velvety. —V.B.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $60



92 Va Piano 2012 Syrah (Columbia Valley). This blend of Les Collines (60%), Lewis (20%) and Portteus (20%) vineyards, which saw 25% new French oak, offers blueberry and huckleberry along with herb and dark chocolate accents. It's supple and soft in feel, deft but with depth to the fruit flavors. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $40



91 Armida 2012 Parmelee-Hill Vineyard Zinfandel (Sonoma Coast). Velvety on the palate, this wine initially conveys a sense of restraint. A shy line of cool-climate raspberry and strawberry are made brighter on the palate by zesty acidity. Begging for grilled meats, it becomes more substantial over time, offering leather and savory spice. —V.B.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** $48



91 Aver Family Vineyards 2011 Blessings Petite Sirah (Santa Clara Valley). Black as night in the glass and noticeably viscous, this shows brooding aromas of heavy char, black tobacco, cassis, bloody meat and balsamic vinegar. The palate isn't so heavy, though. Good acidity and tannins glide across the tongue while offering flavors of pencil lead, black cherry extract and black pepper. —M.K.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $49



91 Bianchi 2011 Heritage Selection Syrah (Paso Robles). Licorice, blackberry extract and a slate-driven mineral element power the complex nose. There's great tension between hearty, ripe olallieberry fruit and bitter plum skins on the palate, resulting in one of the winery's best 2011s. —M.K.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $26



91 Bonterra 2012 Made With Organic Grapes Cabernet Sauvignon (Lake County-Mendocino County). Made mostly from Mendocino grapes, this presses all the right buttons—the deep, dark red color; the spicy, toasty aromas; the ripe, black cherry and currant flavors; the firm tannins and full body. It's tasty, and built for enjoyment alongside a great meal involving rich protein. ***Editors' Choice***. —J.G.
abv: 14% **Price:** $16



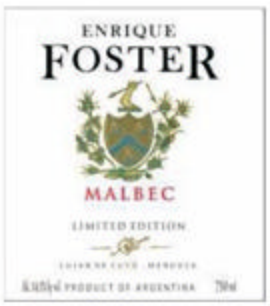
91 Castello di Bolgheri 2011 Bolgheri Superiore. Ripe dark-skinned fruit, blue flower, graphite and exotic spice aromas come together in the glass. The smooth, concentrated palate delivers black cherry, black currant, ground pepper and licorice, with just a hint of game. Thanks to the firm, velvety tannins, it's already enjoyable but will also maintain for several years at least; drink through 2019. Total Beverage Solution. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $60



91 Cerro Prieto 2009 Reserve Merlot (Paso Robles). Larry and Teresa Stanton take meticulous care of their southern Paso fruit, which results in this wine that's brimming with aromas of cedar, blackberry, anise and mint. The flavors walk a line between red and purple fruit and cigar box woodiness, with crushed black rock, mocha and espresso accents. It's quite elegant and still lively. —M.K.
abv: 15.8% **Price:** $42



91 Château Larose-Trintaudon 2012 Haut-Médoc. One of the largest estates in the Médoc, this misses being in Pauillac by being—literally—on the wrong side of the rail tracks. Regardless, the location ultimately gives the wine depth and richness. It's ripe, dark, dense and very structured, showing the new wood that will integrate. Drink from 2018. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. ***Editors' Choice***. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $25



91 Enrique Foster 2007 Limited Edition Malbec (Luján de Cuyo). This well-aged but still lively Malbec opens with cherry, rubber and earthy aromas that reflect time in the bottle. A focused mouthfeel belies the wine's age, while cherry, herb and medicinal flavors finish wide and flush, with more breadth than one might expect from an eight-year-old Malbec. Drink through 2019. Dreyfus, Ashby & Co. —M.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50



91 Francis Ford Coppola 2012 Director's Cut Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). This Cabernet Sauvignon—with smaller amounts of Malbec, Merlot and Petit Verdot—offers satisfying freshness on the palate, with a backbone of singed herb and high-toned cherry. Stuffed with lush blackberry and cassis on the palate, it's an all-around likable wine, aged in both French and American oak, which provide a toasty oak note throughout. —V.B.
abv: 13.8% **Price:** $29



91 Marchesi Antinori 2010 Pian delle Vigne (Brunello di Montalcino). Fleshy dark-skinned fruit, vanilla, underbrush, leather and eucalyptus aromas lead the nose. The round, chewy palate offers mature black cherry, game, anisette and plum cake alongside velvety tannins. It's already surprisingly accessible. Enjoy through 2022. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $80



91 Nickel & Nickel 2012 Hayne Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (St. Helena). From a historic vineyard in the heart of the Napa Valley, this 100% Cabernet Sauvignon develops in the glass, evolving from muted aromas of earth and cinnamon spice to subtle cherry, cassis and oak. Balanced and lovely, the spice stays on the tongue throughout the long finish. It can easily be enjoyed now, but has the structure to age well through 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —V.B.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $100



91 Noble Tree 2013 Estate Chardonnay (Chalk Hill-Russian River Valley). Made by the folks at Thomas George Estates and Westside Winery, this label is meant to deliver high quality at a low price. It delivers completely in this case, offering a high-toned richness of lemon that's layered and doesn't push ripeness or fruit flavor too far, maintaining crispness on the long finish. This is the first vintage from estate vineyards purchased for this project, one in Russian River Valley, the other in Chalk Hill. —V.B.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $18





91 Poggio al Tesoro 2011 Sondraia (Bolgheri Superiore). Made from 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc, this opens with savory aromas of fennel, dark berry, bell pepper and cedar. The firm palate offers black currant, black cherry, clove and Mediterranean herbs. Assertive but fine-grained tannins add elegance. E & J Gallo. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $50



91 Script Cellars 2011 Exordium Cabernet Sauvignon (Wahluke Slope). This 100% varietal wine from this new winery offers up notes of vanilla, herb, cocoa, cherry and woodspice. An elegant, palate-coating mouthfeel comes along with structured, dry tannins and tart acidity. An attractive wine that can be enjoyed now or held through 2020. —S.S.
abv: 13.8% **Price:** $55



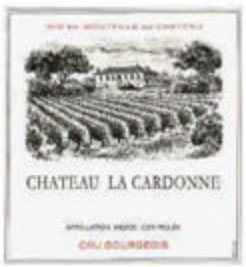
90 Avancia 2013 Godello (Valdeorras). Melon and peach aromas offer mild slate and stone notes. This feels plump and pulpy but not heavy, with good acidity. Peach, white grapefruit and green melon comprise the flavor profile, while the finish is melony, and fattens up with time in the glass. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $31



90 Castello di Bolgheri 2012 Varvàra (Bolgheri). Aromas of tilled earth, spice, leather, blue flowers and Mediterranean herbs lead the nose on this blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and Petit Verdot. The concentrated but polished palate offers a savory core of black cherry and red currant, while notes of bell pepper, mocha and baking spice provide backup. Supple tannins support the juicy flavors. Enjoy through 2017. Total Beverage Solution. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $28



90 Château de Malleret 2012 Haut-Médoc. This 1,000-acre estate with 140 acres of vines is close to Bordeaux and still family owned. With bitter chocolate flavor lying over the fruit, this needs some aging before it can properly integrate. Dark tannins and spice show at the end, along with juicy black-currant fruit. Drink from 2018. Misa Imports. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $26



90 Château La Cardonne 2012 Médoc. This is already an accessible wine, with ripe black fruits and a juicy character. It comes from the highest point of the Médoc (a mere 100 feet above sea level) on deep gravel soil, giving both texture and richness. Berry notes dominate, supported by firm tannins and ample acidity, which will allow the wine to age well. Drink now–2022. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $25



90 Emina 2011 Crianza (Ribera del Duero). Ripe blackberry and lactic oak aromas are smooth and friendly. On the palate, this is saturated but not heavy or pounding. Flavors of ripe blackberry, raisin, herbs and spice cover the Ribera del Duero spectrum, while a toasty, lightly charred finish is strong but not overly demanding. Matarromera USA, Inc. —M.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $25



90 Gary Farrell 2012 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Blue fruit and high acidity open this delightful Pinot Noir, from a cool section of the Russian River Valley overlapping Green Valley. The oak imprint is low, yet the wine offers firm structure and elegance, remaining subdued and fresh on the palate in swirls of dark cherry, boysenberry and earthy leather. —V.B.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $55



90 Guado al Tasso 2013 Il Bruciato (Bolgheri Superiore). This bright red opens with aromas of red berry, blue flower and a whiff of baking spice. A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah, the linear palate offers juicy black cherry, clove, vanilla and coffee alongside assertive yet fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. A licorice note signals the close. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $31



90 Hess Collection 2012 Allomi Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This interesting blend of 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Petite Sirah and 2% Petit Verdot works on many levels. Floral lavender and violet open the wine before a light, rounded touch of blackberry and leather hit the palate, followed by earthy cola spice. Well-priced and easy to enjoy, it puts good winemaking on display. —V.B.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $30



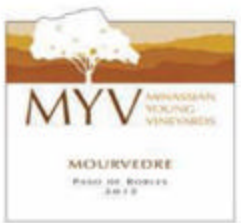
90 Kunde 2013 Destination Series Sustainably Farmed and Estate Grown Viognier (Sonoma Valley). Briny, with a hint of salted caramel, this is a high-toned white wine, refreshing in lemon and pear notes, with a slight suggestion of orange peel that's entirely welcoming. Focused and crisp throughout, it remains vibrant amid a creaminess to the mouthfeel, finishing with the right balance of both. —V.B.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** $22



90 La Caña 2013 Albariño (Rías Baixas). This ready-to-drink Albariño smells leesy and minerally, with notes reminiscent of fresh apple and nectarine. The palate is pure and round, showing good body and preserving acidity. Peach and apple are the key flavors, while a full, leesy finish completes the picture. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** $18



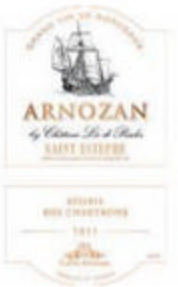
90 Minassian-Young 2012 Mourvèdre (Paso Robles). A lively, dynamic take on the grape, this shows rich and spicy aromas of Asian plum sauce, smoldering sagebrush and tobacco. The palate is thick and chewy yet refreshing, offering dried strawberry, stewed cherry and truffle. Drink now. —M.K.

abv: 14.4% **Price:** $26



90 Nickel & Nickel 2012 John C. Sullenger Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). This chocolaty, earthy 100% Cabernet Sauvignon comes from a vineyard site in the middle of Oakville, farmsteaded since the 1880s. Campfire and graphite jump out, swaddled in restrained yet sizable tannins and a distinct herbal overtone. Expansive as it develops, the wine finishes strong in vanilla and more chocolate. —V.B.

abv: 14.3% **Price:** $100



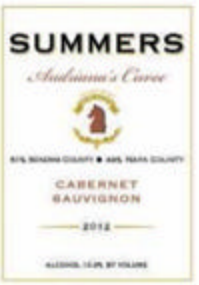
90 Producta Vignobles 2011 Arnozan by Château Léo de Prades Réserve des Chartrons (Saint-Estèphe). This sophisticated, wood-aged wine is perfumed with polished wood and black currant. The palate offers tight tannins and ample acidity. Although it is already ripe and fruity, the structure of the wine promises successful aging; drink from 2017. PG Imports. ***Editors' Choice***. —R.V.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** $18



90 Ravenswood 2012 Old Hill Zinfandel (Sonoma Valley). From a famed old site planted to 75% Zinfandel and 25% mixed black-skinned varieties, this wine conveys a minty-eucalyptus quality that tunes the acidity high against a medium-weight body. Austere at first on the palate, it expands as it goes, offering robust, dry tannins and layers of cardamom and coffee with time and air. —V.B.

abv: 15.2% **Price:** $60



90 Summers 2012 Andriana's Cuvee Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County-Napa County). This Cab-based blend sources 51% of its grapes from Sonoma County, including small amounts of Merlot, Petite Verdot, Malbec, Syrah, Petite Sirah and Cabernet Franc. Medium in weight, the wine at first is slightly muted, but upon opening it provides Syrah-like meatiness and peppery spice around an intriguingly brooding sense of tar and black currant. —V.B.

abv: 13.9% **Price:** $20



90 Trapiche 2012 Broquel Malbec (Mendoza). With a warm nose of plum and blackberry, this sports a juicy, wiry palate, with woody weight. Raspberry, plum, toast and leather flavors finish earthy and lightly baked, with leftover oak that needs to be absorbed. Drink through 2018. The Wine Group. —M.S.

abv: 14% **Price:** $18

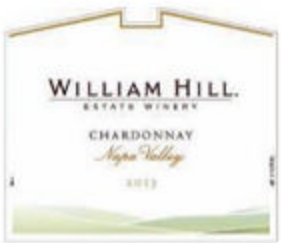


90 Two Sisters 2012 Lindsay's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). This upper-end brand for Bill Foley's Santa Barbara projects delivers a nose of dark raspberry, slate and clove. Tongue-tingling acidity emerges amid flavors of pomegranate juice, black pepper and toasted sage. The lively palate benefits from a seared lemon-skin bitterness. —M.K.

abv: 14.3% **Price:** $75



90 Va Piano 2012 Ox (Columbia Valley). A new addition to the winery's lineup, this blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (78%), Merlot (12%), Cabernet Franc (4%), Syrah (4%) and Petit Verdot (2%) conveys dark chocolate, coffee and cherry. The cherry flavor shows both intensity and restraint backed by well-integrated tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $30



90 William Hill Estate 2013 Chardonnay (Napa Valley). Aromas of orange blossom and jasmine intoxicate on the entry of this delightful wine, which combines in complex ways to offer savory fennel with a creaminess to the texture. That complexity continues through the finish, which ends long and lean. —V.B.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $27



88 Columbia Winery 2013 Merlot (Columbia Valley). The nose of this wine offers powerful aromas of raspberry jam, mocha and herb. The ripe and luscious flavors feel full and broad, backed by chalky tannins that lend ample structure. An approachable and enjoyable wine. —S.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $17



87 Austerity 2013 Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands). Aromas of spiced strawberry pie and wet slate emerge on this wine from a brand that seeks to offer quality at affordable prices. The palate shows medium-intense cranberry fruit, with a hint of anise spice. It's fairly straightforward and ideal for nightly sipping. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $17



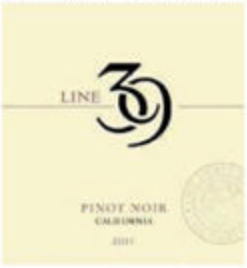
87 Michael David 2012 Freakshow Cabernet Sauvignon (Lodi). Heavy aromas and flavors of oak and smoke accompany ripe black cherry and boysenberry for a rich mixture. This wine is deeply colored, full bodied and pumped up with the flavors of heavily toasted oak. A firm but not harsh texture accompanies the almost sweet taste of all that oak. —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $20

BEST BUYS



91 Block Nine 2013 Caiden's Vineyards Pinot Noir (California). Classy and classic French oak and red cherry aromas combine with raspberry flavors, lively acidity and firm, textured tannins to make a complete, well-balanced wine. This is a bit more austere than many of its peers, but the taut balance and appetizing texture make it more compelling. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13.1% **Price:** $15

BEST BUYS



90 Line 39 2013 Pinot Noir (California). Aromatic and elegant, generous and supple, this tastes rich while feeling polished and complete. An enticing, light aroma of oaky spice and raspberry mixes with tasty red cherry and black currant flavors on the palate. It is medium bodied, smooth in texture, and has a mild finish. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $11



89 Bodegas Dios Baco S.L. NV Riá Pitá (Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda). If you want an affordable, crisp Sherry to get an evening going, this is a good choice in terms of value and quality. Lightly oxidized aromas of vanilla and briny nectarine bring a whiff of turpentine. Creamy on the edges and acidic in the middle, this dry Manzanilla delivers briny, nutty apricot and citrus flavors in front of a lasting, nutty finish. CIV/USA. ***Best Buy***. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $12

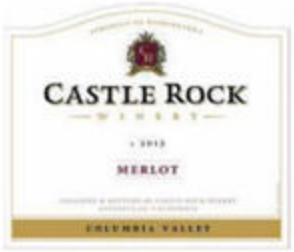


89 Kirkland Signature 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa County). A majority of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon is at the core of this exceptional value, a wine that's classic in red, high-toned cherry and currant fruit. Soft, yet with ample structure, it offers everything one needs in a hearty red wine that's also accessible now. ***Best Buy***. —V.B.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $13

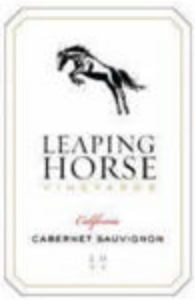
BEST BUYS



88 Kirkland Signature 2009 Reserva (Rioja). This is honest, fresh, balanced and easy to drink, with Rioja authenticity. Aromas of earth, tomatoes, herbs and red fruits are light and nice. Flavors of salty plum, red currant and vanilla should be familiar to Rioja fans, while the finish is persistent. Quintessential Wines. ***Best Buy***. —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $7

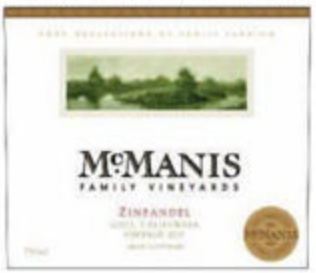


87 Castle Rock 2012 Merlot (Columbia Valley). The aromas of this wine suggest plum, herb and pencil eraser. It's full flavored with dark blue fruit and chalky, dry tannins. An affordable and approachable wine best enjoyed now. ***Best Buy***. —S.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $11

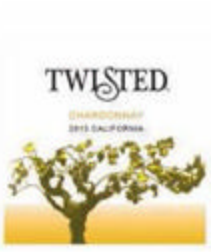


87 Leaping Horse 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). Exuberant, ripe fruit flavor energizes this medium-bodied yet smooth and fresh-textured wine. Shadings of spicy oak add complexity. The freshness and fruit will make a great pairing with spiced meats. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $10

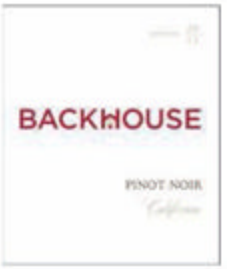
BEST BUYS



87 McManis 2013 Zinfandel (Lodi). This tastes honest, clean and direct, with a nice mixture of fruity, woody and savory herbal aromas and flavors. It's medium in body and offers just a touch of tannin to add a little grip to the texture. A tasty raspberry note gives it even more personality. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $11

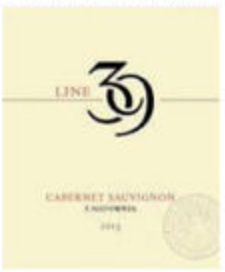


87 Twisted 2013 Chardonnay (California). Fresh apple flavors and a crisp vein of acidity make this medium-bodied wine lively and refreshing, while still delivering delicious Pippin apple and white peach flavors. It feels balanced, clean and easy to enjoy. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13% **Price:** $8



86 Backhouse 2013 Pinot Noir (California). Light ruby in color, this offers fresh raspberry and red cherry aromas, slightly softer flavors of ripe plum and a smooth texture. It is medium bodied and easy to enjoy. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13% **Price:** $8

BEST BUYS



86 Line 39 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). Big and brawny, this has bold, ripe fruit aromas and flavors that are shaded by thyme and dill, and backed by very firm tannins and good acidity. The mouthfeel is full and astringent, and the mouth-puckering tannins last on the finish. Enjoy it now with pork ribs or flank steak. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $11



86 Redtree 2013 Chardonnay (California). This value-minded selection blends plenty of bright citrus and apple flavors with good acidity and a hint of sweetness for a complete and pleasing package. It is medium bodied, light on its feet and refreshing. Enjoy now. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $9



86 Three Thieves 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). Deep in color, big in flavor and full bodied, this is a rustic, straightforward wine. It smells like very ripe blackberry and black cherry, tastes dense and feels full, tannic and firm-textured. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $8

BEST BUYS



86 Three Thieves 2013 Pinot Grigio (California). Freshness and refreshment are the strong points of this well-balanced, tangy, medium-bodied wine. It is light in fruit aroma and subtle in flavor, offering some crisp apple inspiration on the palate and finish. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** $8



84 Kirkland Signature 2013 Pinot Grigio (California). A good choice when the wine needs to be a supporting player and not a star, this has neutral aromas, crisp acidity, lemon and cucumber flavors, light body and a texture that smooths out nicely. ***Best Buy***. —J.G.
abv: 12% **Price:** $8/1.5 L

SPIRITS



93 Tapatio Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Domaine Charbay Distillers, Ukiah, CA). Though it's light straw in the glass, with hardly any color, the flavor is robust and complex. Scented with perky black pepper and spice, the palate echoes the pepper up front, followed by a fleeting meaty umami note midpalate and a long finish that boasts sparks of ginger and cayenne. Aged eight months.
abv: 40% **Price:** $44/1 L

tannins and bright acidity. It boasts character and depth. Drink 2017–2030. Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. ***Cellar Selection***. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $NA

94 Abbadia Ardenga 2010 Vigna Piaggia (Brunello di Montalcino). An alluring fragrance of rose, aromatic herb, dark berry and a whiff of new leather take shape in the glass. The firm palate delivers ripe, dark berry, grilled sage, mint and sweet pipe tobacco alongside austere tannins that need time to come around. It's well balanced, with a licorice finish. Drink after 2018. Peter Warren Selections. ***Editors' Choice***. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $43

94 Armilla 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Alluring aromas suggest perfumed berry, pressed flower, leather and forest floor. The vibrant palate delivers wild cherry, raspberry, cinnamon, white pepper and savory herb alongside firm, fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Hand-crafted by a tiny gem of a winery located in the superb Santa Restituta area, it's radiant, well balanced and loaded with finesse. Drink 2018–2030. Omniwines Distribution. ***Cellar Selection***. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $63

94 Bolsignano 2010 Grazia (Brunello di Montalcino). This traditionally crafted Brunello offers aromas of wild berry, violet, Mediterranean scrub and a whiff of new leather. There's lots of juicy Morello cherry and crushed raspberry on the palate, while notes of vanilla, savory herb, tobacco, licorice and a hint of salinity add depth. It's well balanced with velvety tannins and bright acidity that give it both power and finesse. Drink 2018–2030. CV Tuscany Wine Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $NA

94 Castello Romitorio 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of wild violet, perfumed red berry, tilled earth and hint of underbrush waft from the glass. The elegant palate delivers layers of wild cherry, crushed raspberry, baking spice, coffee and a hint of licorice. It's well balanced with youthfully austere tannins and bright acidity. It will age beautifully. Drink 2017–2030. Vinifera Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $72

94 Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Enticing aromas recall pressed rose, blue flower, crushed berry and tilled earth. The palate delivers juicy black cherry, crushed strawberry, cake spice and savory herb alongside assertive but fine-grained tannins. It's well balanced but still young and needs time to unwind. Indigenous Selections. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $NA

94 Collosorbo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Warm, toasty aromas of leather, savory herb, hay, fennel, menthol, forest floor and dark berry come together in the glass. The vibrant palate offers layers of red cherry, crushed raspberry, cinnamon and grilled herb. It's well balanced, with tightly knit but polished tannins and fresh acidity. Drink 2020–2030. North Berkeley Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $50

94 Le Potazzine 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Loaded with finesse, this opens with aromas of pressed violet, perfumed berry, orange zest and whiff of forest floor. The vibrant palate delivers wild red cherry, tangy cranberry, baking spice, grilled herb and anise alongside firm, polished tannins and bright acidity. It's already tempting but give it time to develop fully. Drink 2018–2028. de Grazia Imports LLC. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $95

94 Poggio Antico 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Underbrush, red berry, tilled soil, pressed flower and a balsamic note are some of the aromas offered by this radiant red. The bright palate delivers crunchy wild cherry, baking spice and savory herb alongside assertive but refined tannins. It's well balanced with fresh acidity. Drink 2018–2028. The Sorting Table. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $85

94 Querce Bettina 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Forest floor, leather, fennel and woodland berry aromas lead the nose. The vibrant palate delivers crunchy red cherry-berry, eucalyptus, sage and a balsamic note alongside fine-grained tannins. Drink 2017–2025. Wine Symphony. ***Cellar Selection***. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $75

94 Ridolfi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Alluring aromas of wild berry, leather, forest floor, Mediterranean brush and a balsamic note mingle in the glass. The tight palate doles out Morello cherry, crushed raspberry, baking spice and grilled herb alongside firm tannins and vibrant acidity. White pepper closes the finish. It's well balanced but needs time to develop complexity. Drink 2018–2028. Opici Wines. —K.O.
abv: NA **Price:** $50

94 San Polino 2010 Helichrysum (Brunello di Montalcino). Rose petal, wild berry, pipe tobacco, spiced plum and refreshing aromatic herb aromas take shape in the glass. The juicy palate offers ripe black cherry, plum, mint, licorice and white pepper alongside assertive but refined tannins. It boasts power and finesse. Drink after 2020. T. Edward Wines Ltd. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $110

94 Sesta di Sopra 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Intense aromas suggest dark berry, forest floor, savory spice, menthol, leather and a balsamic note. The juicy palate offers crushed wild cherry, black raspberry, cinnamon, savory herb and licorice. It's well balanced and vibrant but hold for complexity. Drink 2020–2030. Premier Wine Co. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $53

94 Villa I Cipressi 2010 Zebras (Brunello di Montalcino). Lovely Sangiovese aromas of pressed blue flower, mint, leather, berry and a balsamic note mingle in the glass. The juicy palate doles out ripe wild cherry, black plum, cinnamon, licorice and mocha alongside firm, velvety tannins. Drink after 2018. Acid Inc Selections. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $85

94 Villa Poggio Salvi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Underbrush, woodland berry, cake-spice aromas and a whiff of eucalyptus come together in the glass. The firm palate offers layers of juicy dark cherry-berry, licorice, tobacco and a hint of vanilla. It's balanced and intense, with chewy tannins. Drink 2020–2030. Vintage Imports, Inc. —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $54

93 Abbadia Ardenga 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Enticing aromas of woodland berry, violet, savory herb and a whiff of game lead the nose. The palate offers red berry, crushed raspberry, clove and grilled herb alongside firm but polished tannins. An anise note marks the finish. Drink 2020–2030. Peter Warren Selections. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $48

93 Altesino 2010 Montosoli (Brunello di Montalcino). From Montalcino's most famous vineyard site, this opens with aromas of cured meat, grilled herb and a whiff of mature olive. The palate offers red cherry, licorice, savory herb and a mineral note alongside youthfully assertive but fine-grained tannins that need time to unwind. Drink after 2018. Winebow. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $125

93 Caparzo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. For full review see page 95.
abv: 14% **Price:** $45

93 Col di Lamo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. The nose is still a bit closed but eventually reveals leather, game, berry and forest floor. The palate is more expressive, delivering concentrated wild cherry, black raspberry, cooking spice, savory herb and anise. A backbone of firm but polished tannins and fresh acidity provides the framework. Drink 2020–2030. Universal Wines & Spirits. —K.O.
abv: NA **Price:** $50

93 Donatella Cinelli Colombini 2010 Selezione Prime Donne (Brunello di Montalcino). Aromas of dark berry, graphite, forest floor and grilled herb mingle in the glass. The savory palate offers ripe black cherry, grilled herb, vanilla, licorice and a gamy note alongside a firm, tannic backbone. Drink after 2018. Banville Wine Merchants. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $80

93 Fanti 2010 Vallocchio (Brunello di Montalcino). Full bodied, this opens with aromas recalling blue flower, pressed powder, perfumed berry, game and a balsamic note. The firm palate delivers black cherry, coffee, vanilla, anise and grilled herb, with a backbone of assertive tannins. Drink after 2020. Massanois Imports. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $70

93 Fattoi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of wet soil, underbrush and a whiff of game lead the nose. The palate offers crushed wild cherry, black raspberry, clove and grilled herb alongside firm tannins and fresh acidity. Drink 2018–2028. Tricana Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $60

93 Fossacolle 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of stewed plum, wet earth, leather, game and an exhilarating whiff of menthol lead the nose. The vibrant palate shows great intensity, delivering juicy black cherry, crushed raspberry, licorice, tobacco and white pepper alongside chewy tannins and firm acidity. Drink after 2020. Vias Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

93 Gianni Brunelli 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas suggest underbrush, crushed berry and moist soil. The palate offers wild cherry, licorice, tobacco, rosemary and sage alongside firm tannins. It still needs to open up and fully develop. Drink 2018–2028. de Grazia Imports LLC. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $67

93 Il Grappolo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas recall mature dark berry, stewed plum, underbrush, leather and a hint of game. The firm palate delivers juicy wild cherry, cinnamon, clove, licorice and rolled pipe tobacco alongside youthfully assertive but fine-grained tannins. Drink 2020–2030. Franco Wine Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

93 La Fortuna 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Intense berry, violet, menthol and white-spice aromas lead the nose, with a whiff of new leather The vibrant palate delivers crunchy red cherry, fleshy raspberry, baking spice and savory herb alongside assertive but refined tannins and fresh acidity. Drink 2018–2018. Casa Bruno. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $60

93 Lazzeretti 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Ripe berry and earthy aromas of leather, game and soil lead the nose on this structured wine. The chewy palate has nice concentration, weight and intensity, offering wild cherry and baking spice. It's still young but well balanced, with nervous acidity and tightly wound tannins. Drink 2020–2030. Morandell Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $40

93 Mastrojanni 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of meat juices, underbrush, savory spice and a whiff of espresso open this structured wine. The vibrant palate offers dried Morello cherry, fleshy raspberry, ground pepper, grilled herb and tobacco alongside bracing but fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Hold for more complexity. Drink 2018–2030. Multiple U.S. importers. —K.O.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

93 Mastrojanni 2010 Vigna Loreto (Brunello di Montalcino). Aromas of blue flower, pressed powder and perfumed berry mingle in the glass. The rich palate offers layers of ripe wild cherry, vanilla cinnamon-spice, savory herb and licorice alongside assertive, fine-grained tannins. Drink 2018–2025. Multiple U.S. importers. —K.O.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

93 Molino di Sant'Antimo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Earthy aromas of game, leather, tilled soil and eucalyptus lead the nose. The concentrated palate shows some muscle, delivering ripe wild cherry, crushed raspberry, mocha, licorice and tobacco along with assertive but fine-grained tannins. Hold for complexity. Drink 2018–2028. Massanois Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $35

93 Padelletti 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Earthy aromas include tilled soil, underbrush, blue flower and wild berry. The firm, vibrant palate delivers juicy Morello cherry, cinnamon, Mediterranean herb and a licorice note alongside fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Drink 2018–2030. Holiday Beverage. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $90

93 Pecci Celestino 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Blue flower, wild berry, savory herb and menthol aromas lead the nose. The intense palate offers ripe wild cherry, crushed raspberry, white pepper and mineral alongside firm but fine tannins and bright acidity. Drink 2018–2028. Superior Wines. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $74

93 San Giacomo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Full bodied and balanced, this conveys aromas of menthol, underbrush, savory herb, fennel, tilled soil and leather. The vibrant palate offers bright red cherry, crushed raspberry, clove, grilled herb, anise and a balsamic note alongside tightly knit but poised tannins and bright acidity. Drink 2018–2025. Enoclassica Selection. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $50

92 Altesino 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Menthol, leather, pressed flower and woodland berry aromas mingle with a balsamic note. The delineated palate delivers sour red cherry, sage and a note of baking spice alongside youthfully austere but fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. This is more about finesse and balance but it should also develop more complexity over the next few years. Drink 2016–2025. Winebow. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $65

92 Argiano 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Underbrush, savory herb, leather and dark-skinned fruit aromas mingle in the glass. The firm,


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structured palate delivers mature plum, black cherry, vanilla, licorice and a confectionary note alongside assertive tannins. Drink 2018–2028. Vias Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $66

92 Canneta 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of rose, violet, leather, star anise, wild berry and a balsamic note lead the nose. The fresh palate offers earthy red cherry, grilled herb, fennel, white pepper and clove alongside firm, fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Drink 2017–2022. Orvino Imports & Distribution. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $35

92 Centolani 2010 Poggiotondo (Brunello di Montalcino). Aromas of menthol, dried flower, ripe berry, leather and savory herb lead the nose. The rich palate delivers crushed wild cherry, stewed plum, cinnamon, anise and a hint of vanilla alongside round tannins. Despite its big, friendly structure, it also boasts finesse. Drink through 2022. Soilair Selection. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $45

92 Col d'Orcia 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Earthy aromas suggest tilled soil, savory herb, leather, dried rose and a whiff of game. The bright palate offers crushed cherry, black raspberry, savory herb and white pepper alongside polished tannins. It's well balanced and fresh. A licorice note signals the close. Palm Bay International. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $55

92 Crocedimezzo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Opening aromas include woodland berry, game, Mediterranean herb and a whiff of leather. The vibrant palate offers red cherry, sage, thyme and white pepper alongside fine-grained tannins. Drink 2018–2028. Aventine Hill LLC. —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

92 La Fiorita 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of wild berry, savory herb, menthol and toast lead the nose. The vibrant palate delivers crunchy red cherry, eucalyptus, sage and cooking spice alongside youthfully assertive tannins and brisk acidity. It closes on a licorice note. Drink 2020–2030. Chambers & Chambers. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $68

92 La Magia 2010 Ciliegio (Brunello di Montalcino). An intriguing mélange of aromas includes cured meat, underbrush, game, Mediterranean scrub and a whiff of wet fur. The hearty palate offers black cherry, plum, toasted oak, grilled rosemary, fennel and anisette alongside tightly wound tannins and fresh acidity. Drink 2020–2030. Medallion Global. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $150

92 La Mannella 2010 I Poggiarelli (Brunello di Montalcino). For full review see page 96.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $95

92 Lambardi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Classic Sangiovese aromas of underbrush, pressed powder, violet and wild berry mingle in the glass. The vibrant palate offers layers of black cherry, dried red cherry, white pepper, truffle and savory herb alongside firm but refined tannins and bright acidity. This is all about polish and finesse. Drink 2018–2028. Siena Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $90

92 Le Chiuse 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Red berry, forest floor, grilled herb, tobacco leaf and leather aromas mingle with a balsamic note. The firm palate shows energy and elegance, offering crunchy red berry, savory herb, star anise and graphite. It's still tightly closed and austere, with bright acidity and youthfully clenched tannins that need time to develop fully. Drink 2020–2030. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $60

92 Tenuta Buon Tempo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of menthol, savory herb and exotic spice take shape in the glass. The firm palate offers layers of dark cherry, clove and grilled sage alongside assertive but fine-grained tannins. A note of anise signals the close. Blicker Pierce Wagner Wine Merchants. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $NA

92 Tenuta La Fuga 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Pretty aromas suggest violet, rose, leather, pressed powder and a balsamic note. The full-bodied palate boasts succulent red berry, cake spice, black tea and mineral alongside ripe but refined tannins. It shows both power and finesse despite the heat of evident alcohol that dominates the finish. Kobrand. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $50

92 Tenuta San Giorgio 2010 Ugolforte (Brunello di Montalcino). This opens with an enticing fragrance of rose, violet, dark berry and underbrush. The firm palate delivers juicy wild cherry, cinnamon and star anise alongside firm but fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Drink 2018–2028. Majestic Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

92 Villa I Cipressi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Earthy aromas suggest forest floor, wet leaves, savory herb and menthol. On the palate, balsamic notes, eucalyptus, and white pepper accent a core of juicy black cherry. It's young but balanced with firm, refined tannins and fresh acidity. Drink 2020–2025. Acid Inc Selections. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $65

91 Caprili 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of tilled soil, leather and red berry lead to a robust palate that offers dried red cherry, anise and hint of cake spice alongside firm, fine-grained tannins. It's straightforward and already accessible but will age well for several years. Drink 2016–2022. Multiple U.S. importers. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $50

91 Castelgiocondo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. This structured red opens with aromas of tilled earth, mature plum, toasted oak, leather and a whiff of cellar floor. The vibrant palate delivers crushed black cherry, plum cake, cinnamon and dried sage, with assertive tannins and bright acidity. It closes on a licorice note. Drink 2018–2030. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $79

91 Corte Pavone 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Made with organically farmed grapes, this opens with pretty aromas of crushed rose, violet, perfumed berry, leather, truffle and a balsamic note. The warm palate doles out fleshy wild cherry, stewed plum, cake spice, anisette and savory herb alongside velvety tannins. It closes on a licorice note and the heat of evident alcohol. Drink 2018–2025. Superior Wines. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $78

91 Il Palazzone 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Firmly structured and elegant, this offers aromas of pressed rose, violet, menthol, savory herb and woodland berry. The palate is still closed but reveals crunchy red cherry, oak, mint and sage alongside youthfully austere tannins that need time to unfold. Drink 2017–2025. Domenico Valentino. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $90

91 Il Poggione 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas recall blue flower, plum, underbrush and baking spice. The full-bodied palate offers mature black cherry, tobacco, anise and black pepper alongside a backbone of firm but refined tannins. Drink 2017–2022. Terlato Wines International. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $85

91 Marchesi Antinori 2010 Pian delle Vigne (Brunello di Montalcino). For full review see page 98.
abv: 14% **Price:** $80

91 Piccini 2010 Villa al Cortile (Brunello di Montalcino). This earthy expression of Sangiovese offers aromas of fennel, dried hay, rose and a balsamic note. The palate delivers wild cherry, raspberry, clove, savory herb and licorice alongside gripping tannins and firm acidity. It still needs to develop. Drink 2020–2030. Foley Family Wines. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $45

91 Talenti 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of forest floor, perfumed berry, cooking spice and a whiff of violet lead the nose on this structured red. The firm palate offers lightly toasted oak, wild cherry, orange zest, licorice, menthol and Mediterranean herb alongside fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Hold for complexity. HP Selections. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $60



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91 **Terralsole 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Aromas of violet, plum, savory herb and a hint of toasted oak lead the nose. The rich palate delivers ripe wild cherry, crushed raspberry, coffee, vanilla and mocha alongside velvety tannins. It's ripe, round and already almost accessible. Drink 2017–2025. Terralsole USA. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $74

91 **Uccelliera 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Hearty and soulful, this offers aromas of tilled soil, leather, game and woodland berry. The meaty palate is still very tightly wound, delivering black cherry, plum, grilled sage, licorice and tobacco alongside bold tannins. Hold until 2018 then enjoy. de Grazia Imports LLC. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $70

90 **Capanne Ricci 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Floral scents of rose and violet also convey red berry, Mediterranean scrub and peppermint camphor. The palate is still tightly wound but reveals crunchy red cherry, cinnamon, white pepper and anise alongside bracing tannins. Drink after 2018. Montcalm Wine Importers. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $55

90 **Cordella 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Aromas of leather, coffee, chocolate, grilled rosemary and a balsamic note lead the nose. The smooth palate offers wild cherry, crushed raspberry, licorice and mocha alongside round, ripe tannins. It's not loaded with complexity but it's delicious and already surprisingly accessible. Drink 2016–2022. North Berkeley Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $70

90 **Fanti 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Aromas recall leafy underbrush, woodland berry, coffee, tilled soil and game. The dense palate offers ripe black cherry accented with sage, vanilla, espresso, leather, anise and tobacco alongside assertive, astringent tannins that need to unwind. Drink 2018–2025. Massanois Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

90 **Franci 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Aromas of wild berry, pressed violet, leather, underbrush and a balsamic note lead the nose. The firmly structured palate is still closed but reveals dried red cherry, raspberry, clove, oak, sage and vanilla alongside bracing tannins and firm acidity. The warmth of alcohol is evident on the midpalate. Drink 2017–2022. K&L Wine Merchants. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $129

90 **La Gerla 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** This opens with earthy aromas of wild berry, truffle, underbrush, leather and tilled soil. The savory palate offers juicy cherry, crushed raspberry and savory herb alongside polished tannins. It's not loaded with complexity but it's already smooth and delicious. Enjoy 2016–2022. Multiple U.S. importers. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $NA

90 **Le Macioche 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** This earthy, balsamic expression of Sangiovese opens with aromas of tilled soil, ripe berry, leather, fennel and menthol. The palate offers dried Morello cherry, celery, ground pepper and grilled herb alongside firm but refined tannins. Drink 2017–2028. Tradizione Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $65

90 **Lisini 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Earthy aromas of violet, mature berry, sage, tilled soil and a funky note of game lead the nose. The funky note carries over to the palate along with dried plum and white pepper. Youthfully austere tannins provide the backbone. Soilair Selection. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $NA

90 **Ruffino 2010 Greppone Mazzi (Brunello di Montalcino).** Pretty aromas of red berry, menthol, savory herb and cooking spice lead the nose. The palate offers tart red cherry, white pepper and Mediterranean herb alongside firm, refined tannins and bright acidity. It needs time to develop fully. Drink 2017–2022. Constellation Brands, Inc. —K.O.
abv: NA **Price:** $80

90 **San Polo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Oak, herb, fennel, hay and wild berry aromas lead the nose. The firm palate offers Morello cherry, oak, cinnamon, clove, Mediterranean herb and a confectionary note alongside tightly knit and austere tannins that need to unwind. Drink 2018–2030. Winebow. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $60

90 **SassodiSole 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** This full-bodied red features aromas of underbrush, tilled soil, dark berry, new leather and a whiff of game. The concentrated palate offers ripe black cherry, licorice, mocha and a note of pipe tobacco alongside firm, velvety tannins. It's already ripe and accessible but will also age well for the next decade at least. Drink 2016– 2025. Arte Vino. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $75

90 **Tenuta Buon Tempo 2010 Alta (Brunello di Montalcino).** Underbrush, dried tobacco leaf, dark-skinned fruit and espresso aromas form in the glass. The firm palate offers crushed red cherry, licorice, tobacco and sage alongside tightly woven tannins that need time to unwind. Drink 2020–2030. Blicker Pierce Wagner Wine Merchants. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $NA

90 **Tenute Silvio Nardi 2010 Manachiara (Brunello di Montalcino).** Aromas of toasted oak, berry, spearmint and stewed plum lead the nose on this concentrated wine. The dense palate offers mature plum, fleshy black cherry, vanilla and licorice alongside assertive tannins that need to unwind. Drink after 2018. Kobrand. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $105

89 **Banfi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Aromas include leafy underbrush, fennel, prune and grilled herb. The straightforward palate offers tart red berry, mint, dried sage and white pepper alongside grippy tannins and brisk acidity. Drink after 2018. Banfi Vintners. —K.O.
abv: NA **Price:** $75

89 **Banfi 2010 Poggio alle Mura (Brunello di Montalcino).** Aromas of toasted oak, dark-skinned fruit, leafy underbrush and roasted coffee bean come together in the glass. The palate offers dried black cherry, espresso, mocha, licorice and powdered sage alongside astringent but not very persistent tannins. Drink through 2020. Banfi Vintners. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $86

89 **Brunelli Martoccia 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Aromas of leather, tilled earth, underbrush and a slight whiff of cellar floor lead the nose. The rich palate offers plum, steeped black cherry, cinnamon, menthol and a confectionary note alongside mouth-puckering tannins. Drink after 2020. Small Vineyards LLC. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $50

89 **Caparzo 2010 La Casa (Brunello di Montalcino).** Aromas of toasted oak, espresso, spiced plum, blue flower and menthol lead the nose. The tense palate offers dried cherry, fig, cooking spice, coffee and savory herb alongside still-raspy tannins. It closes on a licorice note. Vineyard Brands. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $70

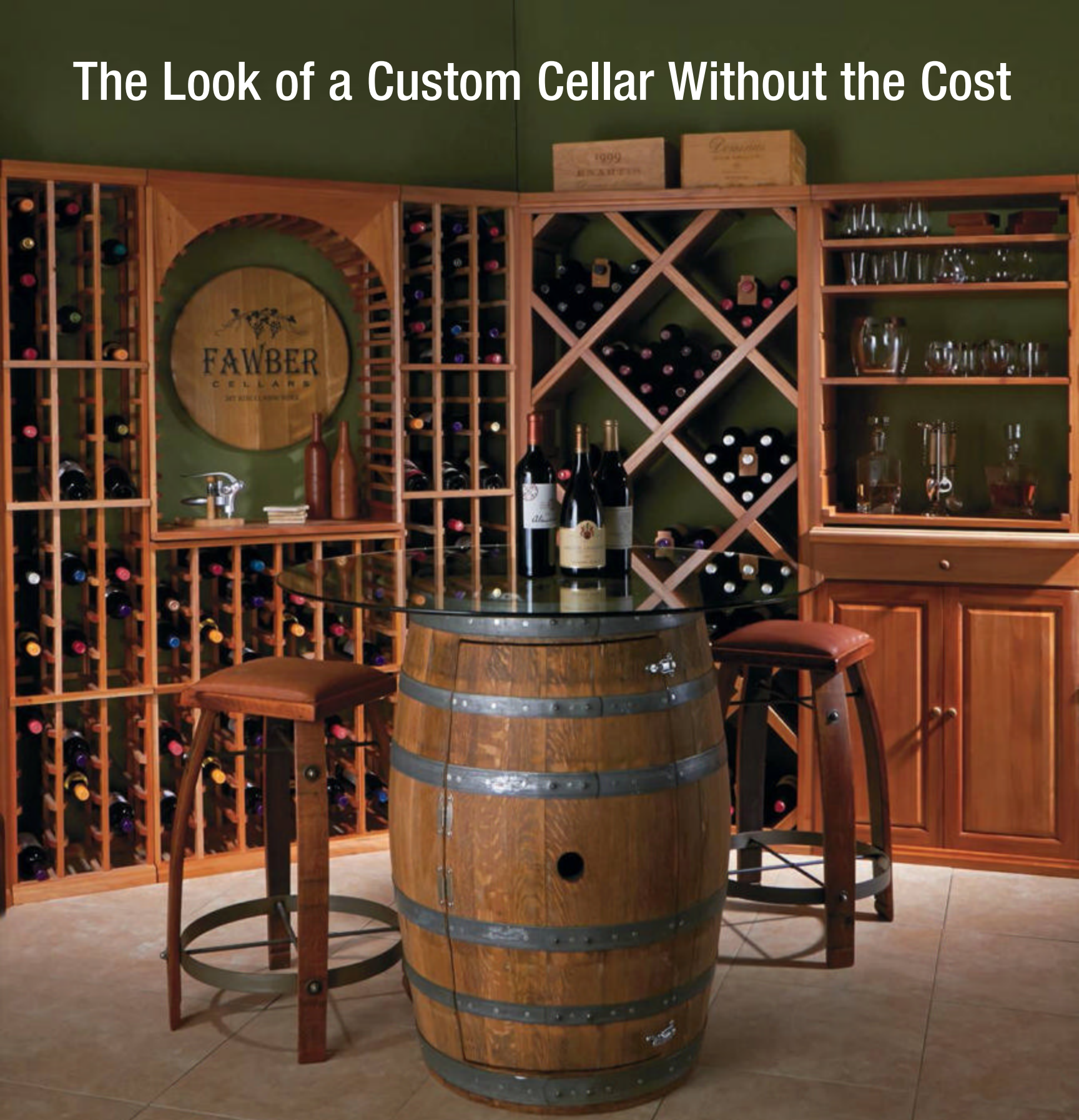
89 **Fornacina 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Warm aromas suggest toast, dry soil, savory herb, fennel and forest floor. The palate offers dried black cherry, raspberry and cooking spice alongside fine-grained tannins and the warmth of alcohol. An anisette note signals the close. Drink 2018–2025. Villa Italia. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $64

89 **Il Valentiano 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Still rather closed, this eventually reveals aromas of cured meat, tilled earth, dark berry and a whiff of cellar floor. The firm palate offers up dark-skinned fruit, licorice and a hint of mocha alongside tightly wound tannins that for now leave a mouth-puckering finish. Give it time to open and develop. Drink 2018–2025. K&L Wine Merchants. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $45

89 **La Collina dei Lecci 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Aromas of blue flower, rose and wild berry waft from the glass. The palate is a bit funky but savory, offering crunchy red berry, black raspberry, game, meat juice, clove and grilled herb. It's still young, with bracing tannins. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $40

89 **Molinari Carlo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino.** Underbrush, berry, blue flower and rose

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lead the nose. Still closed, the firm palate eventually reveals dry cherry, licorice and baking spice. A backbone of firm, fine-grained tannins and bright acidity provides support. It closes on a menthol note. Abruzzi Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $80

89 Palazzo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Underbrush, stewed plum, anisette and dark berry aromas lead the nose on this hearty Brunello. The one-dimensional palate doles out spirit-soaked black cherry, spiced plum, vanilla and licorice alongside velvety tannins. Bedford International. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $70

89 PianCornello 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Oak-driven aromas convey toast, wood shop, vanilla and a whiff of underbrush. The rich palate delivers cherries marinated in spirits, toasted oak, espresso, pipe tobacco, vanilla and a confectionary note alongside bracing wood tannins. A licorice note marks the finish. Superior Wines. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $75

89 Pietranera 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. This opens with aromas of toast, woodshop, vanilla, menthol and a confectionary note. The palate offers red cherry, stewed plum and mocha alongside bracing tannins. Anisette signals the close. Soilair Selection. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $49

89 Podere Paganico 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. This earthy wine opens with rather funky aromas of tilled soil, leather and a whiff of barnyard. The hearty palate offers ripe black cherry, game and savory herb alongside chewy tannins. It's a bit rustic but has charm. Drink 2018–2025. Saranty Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $40

89 San Carlo 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of stewed fruit, leather, tilled soil and a whiff of game take shape in the glass. The austere palate shows bright red berry, ground white pepper and menthol alongside chewy tannins and brisk acidity. It has the breeding to evolve and improve through 2025 or so. Corquete Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $80

89 San Lorenzo 2010 Bramante (Brunello di Montalcino). This opens with aromas of plum, menthol, licorice and a whiff of cellar floor. The palate offers dark berry fruit, clove, dried sage and white pepper alongside assertive, drying tannins and the warmth of evident alcohol. Sunrise Wines. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $60

89 Tassi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Ripe berry, clove, espresso and menthol aromas lead the nose on this hearty wine. The dense, concentrated palate delivers dried cherry, steeped plum, coffee, vanilla, licorice and toasted oak alongside bracing tannins. The heat of evident alcohol throws this wine off balance. K&L Wine Merchants. —K.O.
abv: 15.5% **Price:** $139

89 Tenuta Friggiali 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Underbrush, woodland berry, pressed rose, tobacco leaf, savory herb and menthol aromas mingle in the glass. The palate delivers raw red cherry, anise, white pepper and a note of grilled sage alongside tightly knit tannins and brisk acidity. Soilair Selection. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $60

89 Tenuta Vitanza 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Spearmint, plum, oak, and menthol aromas take shape in the glass. The dense palate shows ripe plum, espresso, vanilla and licorice alongside bracing tannins. Give this time to unwind. Drink after 2018. Kysela Père et Fils. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $60

89 Tenute Silvio Nardi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas recall stewed dark fruit, coffee, clove and toasted oak. The palate delivers plum, woodland berry, mocha, vanilla and a confectionary note alongside bracing tannins. It's still tight and tannic so give it time to unwind. Drink 2017–2022. Kobrand. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $69

89 Terre Nere 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of wild berry, savory herb, eucalyptus and pressed flower lead the nose on this straightforward Brunello. The bright, one-dimensional palate offers white pepper, clove, grilled herb and dried cherry alongside assertive tannins and edgy acidity. Drink 2017–2022. CV Tuscany Wine Imports. —K.O.
abv: 35% **Price:** $15

88 Belpoggio 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas suggest tilled soil, leather, dark berry and a whiff of barnyard. On the palate, notes of grilled herb, clove, black pepper, licorice and a hint of game add interest to the dark berry core. Brooding tannins provide support. Drink 2017–2022. Wine Worldwide. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $45

88 Camigliano 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Pretty aromas convey rose, wild red berry, savory herb and a hint of baking spice. The palate opens with wild cherry, black raspberry, clove and sage but drops off quickly on the midpalate. It's already accessible, with fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Vias Imports. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $55

88 Castiglion del Bosco 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of exotic spice, vanilla, plum and oak characterize this concentrated Brunello. The palate offers dark berry, coconut, toasted oak and dried sage alongside assertive tannins that leave a drying finish. Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $45

88 Cava d'Onice 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of toasted oak, vanilla, spiced plum, leather and a whiff of game lead the nose. The rich palate offers baked black fruit, sage, tobacco and anisette alongside a backbone of assertive tannins. Ribevi Wine Int. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $NA

88 Citille di Sopra 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of forest floor, Mediterranean herb, dark berry, turned soil and game mingle in the glass. The tight palate delivers clove, ground white pepper, grilled herb and dried black cherry alongside bracing tannins. Superior Wines. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $65

88 Fattoria dei Barbi 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. The light garnet color, brick rim and tertiary aromas indicate this is evolving quickly. The palate is more vibrant, displaying menthol, steeped cherry, plum cake, vanilla and licorice alongside bracing tannins. Drink after 2017. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $55

88 Fattoria dei Barbi 2010 Vigna del Fiore (Brunello di Montalcino). Oak, underbrush, tobacco and stewed plum aromas lead the nose. The palate offers roasted coffee bean, vanilla, espresso and licorice alongside astringent but not very persistent tannins. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $80

88 Fattoria La Lecciaia 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Garnet colored with brick tones around the rim, this offers aromas of underbrush, vanilla, leather and dried berry. The palate is still rather closed but displays dried red cherry, white pepper, clove and savory herb alongside austere tannins and fresh acidity. Drink 2017–2022. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $40

88 Fattoria La Lecciaia 2010 Vigna Manapetra (Brunello di Montalcino). This opens with aromas of cured meat, sweaty leather and a stalky note of moist hay. The dense palate is more expressive, offering mature black cherry, spiced plum, mocha, vanilla and a confectionary note alongside velvety tannins. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $48

88 Il Paradiso di Frassina 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. This delivers classic Sangiovese aromas of pressed rose, violet, perfumed berry and forest floor with a balsamic note. The palate shows dried black cherry, vanilla, licorice and confectionary note alongside a bitter accent of powdered sage. Astringent tannins lead to an abrupt, drying finish. Superior Wines. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $35

88 La Torre 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas suggest bright berry, underbrush, eucalyptus and a whiff of wet fur. The palate starts off



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strong, with bright red berry and grilled herb but then it falls off, leaving a somewhat hollow midpalate. Despite the lean character, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity make this very drinkable. Rosenthal Wine Merchants. —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

88 Madonna Nera 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of wild berry, blue flower, vanilla and oak take shape in the glass. The palate offers mature black cherry, vanilla, menthol, mocha and dried sage alongside assertive tannins. It doesn't have quite enough fruit richness to support the tannins. Drink after 2017. Capital Wines. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $45

88 Marchesato degli Aleramici 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of leafy underbrush, toast and menthol lead the nose. On the palate, notes of licorice and grilled herb accent the core of dried red berry. Assertive tannins provide the backbone but still need to unwind. Drink after 2018. Fedway Associates. —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $48

88 Máté 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Leather, toasted oak, dried red fruit and plum cake lead the nose on this hearty Brunello. The robust palate offers jammy dark berry, dried plum, toasted wood, clove, savory herb and licorice alongside a tightly woven network of firm, astringent tannins. You'll also detect the heat of alcohol on the finish. Ethica Wines. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $65

88 Paradisone 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of underbrush, leather, oak spices and espresso lead the nose on this structured wine. The firm palate is still tightly wound, revealing roasted coffee bean, licorice, dried cherry and assertive tannins. Drink 2018–2023. Bedford International. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $75

88 Pietroso 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Oak-driven aromas recall toast, espresso and coconut. The palate offers steeped plum, dried cherry, orange zest, grilled sage and flint, with vigorous tannins. A licorice note signals the close. Enotria Wine Import. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $60

88 Pinino 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of dark berry, blue flower, baking spice and a whiff of forest floor come together in the glass. The vibrant palate starts off with wild cherry, clove and sage but then loses some steam midpalate. Fine-grained but not very persistent tannins offer support. It's already surprisingly accessible. Drink through 2016–2020. Total Beverage Solution. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $45

88 Podere La Vigna 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of toast, espresso and meat juices lead the nose. The palate offers oak, cured meat, grilled herb and dried red fruit alongside firm but fine-grained tannins. Drink 2016–2022. Rodinia LLC. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

88 Podere Scopetone 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. The color on this is surprisingly evolved, showing more brick than garnet, while the nose offers underbrush, tobacco, fennel and red berry. The palate is closed and rather lean, offering raw red cherry, licorice, menthol and mineral alongside assertive but fine-grained tannins. de Grazia Imports LLC. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $60

88 Poggio Antico 2010 Altero (Brunello di Montalcino). Oak, espresso and toast aromas jump out of the glass. The tightly wound palate delivers plum cake, roasted coffee bean, oak extract, licorice, a confectionary note and licorice but not much fruit richness. Raspy wood tannins provide the framework. The Sorting Table. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $104

88 Renieri 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Earthy, almost funky, aromas of tilled soil, leather, toast and game take shape in the glass. The palate offers dried black cherry, powdered sage, tobacco and an anisette note alongside assertive tannins. Drink after 2018. Michelangelo Selections. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

88 Tenute Silvio Nardi 2010 Poggio Doria (Brunello di Montalcino). This opens with aromas of toast, vanilla and stewed plum. The rich, monolithic palate offers fleshy black cherry, vanilla, anisette, plum cake and a confectionary note alongside round tannins. Drink 2016–2022. Kobrand. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $NA

88 Terralsole 2010 Vigna Fonte Lattaia (Brunello di Montalcino). Stewed black fruit, underbrush, grilled sage, game and scorched earth aromas lead the nose. The concentrated, one-dimensional palate doles out overripe cherry-berry, spiced plum, licorice and a confectionary note alongside bold tannins. Terralsole USA. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $89

88 Terralsole 2010 Vigna Pian Bossolino (Brunello di Montalcino). This opens with aromas of toast, oak, stewed plum and a balsamic note. The concentrated palate offers vanilla, fleshy black fruit, menthol, mocha and sage. It's savory but already evolved and fast approaching its ideal drinking window. Enjoy through 2020. Terralsole USA. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $89

88 Val di Suga 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Spiced plum, mocha, leather and Mediterranean herb are some of the aromas that jump from the glass. The one-dimensional palate delivers oak, anisette, stewed plum, vanilla, menthol and a confectionary note alongside drying tannins. Palm Bay International. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $60

88 Villa Le Prata 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas convey ripe berry, menthol, game and a balsamic note. On the palate, notes of clove, black pepper and licorice add depth to the juicy Morello cherry core. A green note of powdered sage appears alongside bracing, drying tannins that create an astringent finish. Drink after 2018. Vinity Wine Company. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $NA

88 Villa Poggio Salvi 2010 Pomona (Brunello di Montalcino). Aromas of stewed plum, game and leather lead the nose. Tightly wound, the concentrated palate offers toast, espresso, fleshy black cherry marinated in spirits and licorice. Aggressive, raspy tannins generate an abrupt finish. Vintage Imports, Inc. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** $90

88 Voliero 2010 Brunello di Montalcino. Aromas of underbrush, prune, plum steeped in spirits, leather and fennel lead the nose. The ripe, fleshy palate shows mature wild cherry, pomegranate, white pepper, eucalyptus, licorice and espresso alongside brooding tannins. This is more about sheer muscle than complexity, and the heat of alcohol that gives a one-dimensional character. de Grazia Imports LLC. —K.O.
abv: 15% **Price:** $60

RED BORDEAUX

SAINT-ESTÈPHE

96 Château Calon Ségur 2012 Saint-Estèphe. Firm and structured, this beautifully concentrated wine has plenty of the dark tannins that come out of Cabernet Sauvignon in Saint-Estèphe while allowing room for juicy fruit. The wood aging is still showing, giving some spice to the wine. At the end, it's the density of the wine that's so impressive. Drink from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $70

95 Château Montrose 2012 Saint-Estèphe. Produced in the magnificent new cellars at Montrose, this big, tannic wine is powerful and concentrated. It has something of the classic severity of a wine from this estate, but that's mitigated by the ripe, generous blackberry fruitiness and the final freshness of a 2012. A great success, to drink from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

94 Château Cos d'Estournel 2012 Saint-Estèphe. This is one of the vintages from Cos that seems to pull out all the stops. The fruit is so rich, the texture so dense, and deep flavors of chocolate back up the huge structure. It does work in its magnificent, flamboyant way. And at the end, the

acidity does its part and gives the wine a final lift. Drink from 2024. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $140

93 Château Le Crock 2012 Saint-Estèphe. Owned by the Cuveliers who also own Léoville Poyferré in Saint-Julien, Le Crock in 2012 is a powerhouse of ripe tannins and juicy acidity. It's a wine that demands aging with its tannins and still-youthful fruitiness. Drink from 2019. United Wine and Spirits. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $35

92 Château Calon Ségur 2012 Marquis de Calon (Saint-Estèphe). Dominated by ripe, juicy Merlot, this smooth wine has already integrated its tannins. Rich and opulent, it has a velvet texture and dusty tannins, along with plenty of acidity from the black currant fruits. Drink from 2017. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $30

92 Château Capbern Gasqueton 2012 Saint-Estèphe. Soft, open and fruity, this is an attractive wine from an estate owned by Calon-Ségur. There are some tannins, although they are cushioned by the rich black berry fruits and sweet structure. The wine is generous, almost ready to drink. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $25

92 Château Cos d'Estournel 2012 Les Pagodes de Cos (Saint-Estèphe). Named after the Chinese facade of this most extraordinary of wineries, this wine is ripe and smooth in a style that brings out richness and a round character. It's already totally integrated, solid while also very generous. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $45

92 Château Le Boscq 2012 Saint-Estèphe. The property of négociant Dourthe is producing some fine wines, including this 2012. It is structured and initially dry, typical of Saint-Estèphe. The fruit though is all there, pushing through the tannins and giving a rich, generous feel to the wine. It's going to age well; wait until 2018. Thiénot USA. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $50

92 Château Lilian Ladouys 2012 Saint-Estèphe. For full review see page 96. ***Cellar Selection***.
abv: 13% **Price:** $35

92 Château Montrose 2012 La Dame de Montrose (Saint-Estèphe). This second wine of Château Montrose is ripe and structured. In 2012, it formed 29% of total production at Montrose. It opens with severe tannins that transform into ripe blackberry as the wine opens out. Solidly structured and darkly tannic, it needs to age. Drink from 2018. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

92 Château Phélan-Ségur 2012 Saint-Estèphe. As is often the case with Phélan Ségur, there is an excess of wood in this wine. Sometimes it works, as here, because the big, bold fruits are powerful enough to match the toastiness. That suggests a future as a ripe, black-fruited and structured wine with room for juicy acidity. Drink from 2019. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $NA

92 Château Sérilhan 2012 Saint-Estèphe. This brings out the firm tannins of Saint-Estèphe while not losing sight of the fruitiness of the vintage. Wood aging adds a smoky character, perhaps too much at this stage, although the Cabernets in the blend are already bringing their black currant freshness to the wine. It will age well; drink from 2018. United Wine and Spirits. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $NA

90 Château Clauzet 2012 Saint-Estèphe. This dense and dark wine is full of ripe, richly juicy black fruits. Solid tannins and layers of wood are softening into the rest of the wine. It's going to develop slowly, releasing the fruit into the tannic structure. Wait until 2018. MHW, Ltd. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $50

90 Château Tour de Pez 2012 Saint-Estèphe. The small area of Pez is one of the top sites in Saint-Estèphe, with many highly rated chateaus. This is one. New wood aging shows strongly at this stage, although so does the fruit. That gives a structured wine, firm and also full of blackberry fruit flavors. The future is good for this wine, so drink from 2018. Millésima USA. ***Editors' Choice***. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $19

90 Château Tronquoy-Lalande 2012 Saint-Estèphe. From an estate whose wine is made by the same team as Montrose, this is a dry, firmly structured wine. It has potential, power and density along with fresher black currant fruitiness. Drink from 2020. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

90 Producta Vignobles 2011 Arnozan by Château Léo de Prades Réserve des Chartrons (Saint-Estèphe). For full review see page 100. ***Editors' Choice***.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $18

88 Château de Côme 2012 Saint-Estèphe. This wine has a rich core of black fruits, dense tannins and good acidity, offering testimony to the firm character of Saint-Estèphe. Concentrated. it will develop well. Wait until 2018. Baron Francois Ltd. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $35

88 Producta Vignobles 2011 Château Grand Chemin Monplaisir (Saint-Estèphe). There is some good structure here, as befits a Saint-Estèphe, along with intense fruits and ripe blackberry flavors. That makes the wine both very drinkable now and gives it aging for the next two years. The aftertaste with its juicy acidity is already attractive. PG Imports. —R.V.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $20



PAUILLAC

97 Château Mouton Rothschild 2012 Pauillac. This is a beautifully opulent wine, great Mouton in its richness and succulent fruits. It's combines structure and obvious new-wood aging with hugely ripe black plum and currant flavors. While it is a pleasure to taste now, there is a great tannic structure in the background to give the sense of power and aging potential. Drink from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $365

96 Château Lafite Rothschild 2012 Pauillac. Showing the serious side of Lafite, this is big and dark, powered by tannins as much as fruit. The wood aging is still showing, although that will integrate into the great structure that holds up the ripe black currant fruits. Totally dominated by some of the finest Cabernet Sauvignon in Bordeaux, this wine has strength while also having great freshness. Drink from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $550

94 Château Clerc Milon 2012 Pauillac. Now firmly in its new cellars, Clerc-Milon's wine is performing at the top of its form. This is a dense wine with juicy acidity as well as sweet tannins and ripe blackberry fruits. They give a ripe wine that is finely structured. The juicy aftertaste, typical of this vintage, is appealing although it does not detract from its power and longevity. Drink from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $62

94 Château Duhart-Milon 2012 Pauillac. This marks an impressive step forward for this wine that's so often been in the shadows of other wines in the Lafite-Rothschild stable. It's dense and structured as well as deliciously fruity. The wine is straight down the line, starting with perfumed acidity and finishing with blackberry fruit. Intense and tannic, it's likely to age. Drink from 2020. —R.V.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $90

93 Château La Fleur Peyrabon 2012 Pauillac. A small portion, the flower (la Fleur) of the Peyrabon vineyard, is in the Pauillac appellation. Richly structured, this wine is full of black currant and berry fruit, with solid tannins. Dense on the palate, it shows ripe Cabernet Sauvignon juiciness. Drink from 2019. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

93 Château Lafite Rothschild 2012 Les Carruades de Lafite (Pauillac). Lafite's second wine is much closer to a balance of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot that the first wine. It's also a properly rich, satisfying wine that is as much fruit as structure. Packed with blackberry fruits, it has a fresh character that dominates the firmer tannins and touch of bitter chocolate. Drink from 2020. —R.V.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $170

92 Château Fonbadet 2012 Pauillac. From the southern end of the Pauillac appellation, Fonbadet has illustrious neighbors such as Château Latour. Typically Cabernets dominate the blend, giving a powerful impetus towards aging. It's a wine that is punching above its status, with solid tannins and impressive black currant fruits. Drink from 2018. Aquitaine Wine Company. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $59

92 Château Gaudin 2011 Pauillac. One of the few great values from Pauillac, this 10-acre estate has produced an attractive perfumed wine that expresses both ripe black fruit and great structure. It's not a wine for long aging with its already-fragrant acidity. It has sweet tannins, delicious fruitiness and a lengthy aftertaste. Drink from 2019. William Harrison Imports. ***Editors' Choice***. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $49

92 Château Pontet-Canet 2012 Pauillac. This tastes jammy and very fruity, with tannins that are totally enveloped by the rich texture. Plummy and comfortable, it's all about ripe berries and currants. Smoky flavors come from the wood aging, and contrast with the Port-like lusciousness of the wine. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

91 Château d'Armailhac 2012 Pauillac. Fruity and rich, this wine is developing fast. It is full of black currant fruits, with an impressive background of solid, structured tannins. The wine is linear, fresh, showing how well this property is developing its quality. It's a wine for medium-term aging, so drink from 2018. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $52

91 Château Pichon Longueville 2012 Les Griffons de Pichon Baron (Pauillac). The equivalent of an alternative second wine from Château Pichon Baron (with Les Tourelles), Les Griffons is named after the statues of griffins that are in the chateau's courtyard. This is a structured wine, firmly tannic while already showing plenty of black currant fruitiness. Equal measures of Merlot and Cabernet balance the wine and give depth of flavor. It will develop soon and will be drinkable from 2017. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $NA

91 Domaine de Saint-Guirons 2008 Pauillac. Owned by the Borie family, one of Bordeaux's most famous (also owner of Haut-Batailley and Grand Puy Lacoste) this wine is mainly Cabernet Sauvignon. This 2008, with its fully developed color, is now moving to the leather and vanilla stage. Spicy, now quite ready to drink, it still shows plenty of Pauillac structure. Drink now. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $NA

88 Château Mouton Rothschild 2012 Le Petit Mouton (Pauillac). This wine is soft and fruity with ripe berry fruits and gentle tannins. For a major second wine, it's surprisingly easy and soft, developing fast with its berry fruits, chocolate and wood flavors at the end. Drink from 2017. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $101

SAINT-JULIEN

96 Château Léoville Las Cases 2012 Saint-Julien. This combines considerable power and concentration with rich, impressive fruits. It has both style and elegance, with density to give it great aging potential. The tannins are firm while also having a velvet texture. The wine, dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon, is for serious aging. Drink from 2025. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $140

95 Château Ducru Beaucaillou 2012 Saint-Julien. This is a wine with big tannins and big fruit. You can feel the wood rather than taste it, certainly smell it initially before the black currant aromas kick in. Impressive and sumptuous, it has a solid density that layers with the smoky character of the fruit and wood. Rich and complex, it needs to age. Drink from 2025. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

94 Clos du Marquis 2012 Saint-Julien. Firm and tannic, this dark berry-flavored wine comes from a specific parcel in the Léoville las Cases vineyard. It's full of tannins and structure, firm and concentrated. At the end, both tannins and tight black currants promise aging. Drink from 2020. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $50

93 Croix de Beaucaillou 2012 Saint-Julien. Effectively a wine with its own dedicated portion of the Ducru Beaucaillou vineyard, this is structured and firm. It's concentrated with dark plum fruits and full of powerful tannins that go right through from start to finish. It certainly needs to age, so don't drink before 2022. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

92 Château Beychevelle 2011 L'Amiral de Beychevelle (Saint-Julien). As a second wine of the chateau, it has some of the style of the top tier of the estate while being approachable. The tannins and perfumed fruit are already well in balance, giving a full, spicy and juicy mélange of black currant and red plum fruit flavors. Drink from 2018. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $50

90 Château Lalande-Borie 2012 Saint-Julien. There's an impressive richness to this wine along with elegance. With its vanilla character from the wood aging, it has smoothness and structure at the same time. At the end, the wine's freshness

and juicy black fruits become more apparent. Drink from 2019. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

90 Château Léoville Las Cases 2012 Le Petit Lion du Marquis de las Cases (Saint-Julien). This wine is light and fresh, full of crisp and ripe black currant fruits that lie alongside gentle and open tannins. The wine has weight and a rich underlay, although it will develop well and relatively quickly with its bright fruits and acidity. Drink from 2016. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $40

MARGAUX

95 Château Margaux 2012 Margaux. This elegant wine is very much in the classic style of Margaux. Although the wood is still showing, the wine has fresh black currant fruits along with an underlying firm, long-lived tannic structure. The aftertaste with its dryness and acidity confirms that. Drink from 2025. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

95 Château Palmer 2012 Margaux. With great depth of fruit, this plush, ripe wine also has dense tannins for aging, layers of acidity and a tight structure. However, it's the fruit that makes this wine, with its waves of black currants and aromatic blueberries. The wood just touches the flavors to promise serious aging. Drink from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

92 Château la Tour de Mons 2012 Margaux. This is a dense wine, solid with black plum and berry flavors that show great warmth and richness. At this stage the wood aging does give some bitter dark chocolate, although this will integrate. It needs aging; drink from 2019. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

92 Château Mongravey 2012 Margaux. Initially, Mongravey often seems to use too much wood. With this 2012, although there are big wood tannins, the fruit is up to the challenge. The result is a rich wine that has weight, black berry fruits and a dark core. It needs to age; wait until 2018. Aquitaine Wine Company. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $35

92 Château Palmer 2012 Alter Ego de Château Palmer (Margaux). Initially densely tannic, this wine quickly reveals a more velvet character that is enhanced by the blackberry fruits. Over half the production at Palmer in 2012 was of this second wine, which is already finely integrated and developing well. Drink from 2020. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

91 Château Deyrem Valentin 2012 Margaux. Ripe and rich, this has plenty of the stylishness of Margaux while also having a structured core. The full-bodied fruit offers black plum and berry flavors, paced with firm tannins and a dark, intense aftertaste. Drink from 2018. APS Wine & Spirits. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $55

91 Château Margaux 2012 Pavillon Rouge de Château Margaux (Margaux). This is a crisp, red-fruited wine with acidity and fresh tannins. It's lost the austerity it showed at barrel tasting and has become surprisingly fresh, only showing its depths and concentration as it unfolds. The texture is smooth, soft with its firmer tannins very much in the background. It's likely to develop quickly. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

90 Château Bellevue de Tayac 2012 Margaux. A small vineyard of just over 10 acres in the north of the Margaux appellation, Bellevue de Tayac obviously received serious attention from then-owner Jean-Luc Thunevin of Château Valandraud in Saint-Émilion. You can taste that in the vanilla flavors from the wood aging and the smooth texture. It's a micro-cuvée that shows great richness and potential. Drink from 2018. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. ***Editors' Choice***. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $30

90 Château Marsac Séguineau 2012 Margaux. Made up of several different parcels scattered across the Margaux appellation, the château now has 24 acres. This 2012 is structured while also full of ripe fruit. The tannins lie behind the juicy red fruitiness and the immediately attractive ripe flavors. It should age, but not for long. Drink from 2017. Noble Wines. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $35

89 Château Paveil de Luze 2012 Margaux. This structured wine has firm tannins and a solid core of wood-aging flavors. At the same time it shows some of the style of Margaux with its balanced acidity and ripe berry fruits. Age until at least 2018. Baron Francois Ltd. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $29

89 Château Tour de Bessan 2012 Margaux. Like many wines from Marie-Laure Lurton, this is dry and shows its firm tannic and wood character. Here the wood verges on too much, giving an austere, hard character. However, the black currant fruit will come through, giving a dry wine that will have some richness. Drink from 2018. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $30

PESSAC-LÉOGNAN

96 Château Haut-Brion 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Firm and solid, this is one of the successes of 2012. It's properly dark and tough at this stage, with that serious intent that's a hallmark of Haut-Brion. Layers of firm tannins are interspersed with blackberry fruits and juicy acidity. The wine is dense and concentrated, with the wood aging still



showing. This powerful wine will need many years. Drink from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

96 Château La Mission Haut-Brion 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This is closed up, dry and tough on the outside. But you can feel the rich weight and the dark tannins along with the powerful structure. That makes this wine both replete with a firm character and also full of generous, concentrated black fruits. It's a powerful wine, ready for good aging; drink from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

94 Château Haut-Bailly 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Very firm and closed up, this wine is a tough proposition at the moment. It has the weight to develop well along with richness. Acidity, sweet fruits and concentrated tannins will all come through strongly as the wine matures. Drink from 2020. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $80

94 Château Malartic-Lagravière 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Big, ripe and juicy, this wears its rich black fruits right up front. A strong and firmly tannic structure serves as a background to the fruit. The wine is rich, complex and full of potential. Spice, ginger and nutmeg come through at the end along with the fruit. Drink from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

94 Château Smith Haut Lafitte 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This dark and dense wine is closed, with its tannins very dominant. It's a solid, dark wine intense with juicy acidity, firm dry structure and a rich core. This is a magnificent wine for serious aging, with all the elements coming strongly into play. Drink from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

94 Domaine de Chevalier 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This structured wine with big, bold red fruits offers ripe acidity, a dense texture and considerable concentration. It also has the hallmark freshness of the vintage that balances the strong aging potential. Drink from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

93 Château de Fieuzal 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Powerful and complete, this shows all the juicy fruit as well as the structure of the vintage. It's big, ripe and concentrated with great fruitiness and tannins. Give this rich wine several years to age to bring out its ripe fruits and complex structure. Drink from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

93 Château Haut-Brion 2012 Le Clarence de Haut-Brion (Pessac-Léognan). An equal blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon with a dash of Cabernet Franc, this wine is structured, serious and also approachable. Ripe, juicy fruit is in evidence under the firm structure and dusty tannins. The combination is a rich and supple wine that will be ready from 2018. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

93 Château Olivier 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This wine is full, juicy and fresh with acidity as well as ripe plum fruits. It's concentrated with a big layer of sweet tannins and firm structure. At the same time, the wine offers the right balance between fruit potential and dry texture. Drink from 2020. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

93 Château Pape Clément 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Concentrated and rich, this has fine tannins that are integrated into the big plum fruits. It's a black-fruited wine that has both the fruit and the structure to allow it to age well. Drink from 2020 —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

92 Château Bouscaut 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Meaty and spicy, this wine is in an early stage of development. It has dark tannins that have an extracted, tough character. However, the weight of ripe fruit is all there, promising a rich and concentrated wine for the future. Drink from 2020. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

92 Château Couhins 2012 Pessac-Léognan. New-wood spice dominates the aroma of this wine, given weight by the rich black plum fruits and concentrated acidity. With its big structure and equally big fruits, this is an impressive wine for long aging. Drink from 2022. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

92 Château Haut Nouchet 2012 Pessac-Léognan. With smoky wood flavors allied to plenty of fruit, this is an attractive and structured wine. It has juicy berry fruits, plenty of acidity and a dark and dense core. It will age well, so drink from 2020. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $40

92 Château La Mission Haut-Brion 2012 La Chapelle de la Mission Haut-Brion (Pessac-Léognan). Named after the chapel that brings out the monastic feel of Château la Mission Haut-Brion, this second wine is firm and tannic, with a dusty texture and a dry, firm aftertaste. It's nowhere near ready to drink although with its weight and the potential of the underlying black currant fruits, it's likely to be richly dense in the years to come. Drink from 2018. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

92 Château Léognan 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This wine is rounded and very complete. Big berry and dark plum-skin flavors are balanced by the firm tannins and sweet vanilla from the wood aging. This is juicy, fresh and structured. It's likely to age well, so don't drink until 2020. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $55

92 Château Les Carmes Haut-Brion 2012 Pessac-Léognan. New wood shows strongly in this wine that has structure and a dry core to match the ripe berry fruits and rich texture. The wine has potential with its juicy fruitiness and dark chocolate flavors. Wait until 2019 before drinking. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $60

92 Château Smith Haut Lafitte 2012 Le Petit Haut Lafitte (Pessac-Léognan). One of the two second wines from Smith Haut Lafitte, this is distinguished by a majority of Cabernet Sauvignon. That gives the wine a great structure along with dark tannins and juicy black fruits. It comes from young vines on the estate, with a youthful exuberance that shows in the fruitiness of this wine. Drink from 2017. Joanne Bordeaux USA. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $40

91 Château Carbonnieux 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This wine is dry, full of tannins and dark fruits. It is weighty, structured and ready for the long term with its acidity, dry tannins, dense structure and intense black currant fruits. Drink this mineral-textured wine from 2020. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $45

91 Château de France 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Dark and dry tannins abound in this wine. It is tough and hard, with a powerful extracted character that dominates any fruit. Very firm and dense, it offers a juicy background that will show well over the next few years. Drink from 2019. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

91 Château Haut Plantade 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Spicy and toasty, this is potentially a full-bodied, juicy wine. Dark tannins and vanilla from the oak are already in place, and the weighty, ripe fruit will follow. Give this concentrated wine until 2019. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

91 Château Latour-Martillac 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This structured wine has juicy acidity as well as big, bold tannins. It's firm and concentrated, a powerful wine that's built for aging. Solid and dense rather than generous, this balanced wine needs many years. Drink from 2020. Millésima USA. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $33

91 Château Seguin 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This wine is smoky with sweet tannin and firmer wood flavors. It offers fresh, succulent fruitiness as well, with berry fruits that give fullness and density. Big and concentrated, this needs to age. Drink from 2019. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $35

90 Château Brown 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This wine is dark, textured and full of ripe fruit. Not yet balanced, it still shows more wood than fruit, but all elements are coming together to give

a full-bodied, wood-aged wine. Drink from 2020. Victoire Imports. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

90 Château Couhins-Lurton 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Vanilla new-wood aromas give a wine polished by its wood aging and dense tannins. Black plum fruits show strongly along with the toasty character. It's for serious aging, so don't drink this structured wine before 2022. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $30

90 Château Haut-Bergey 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This is a tough wine, but one with enough weight and fruit about it. It is dense and packed with potential of good things. Big fruits, big tannins and a dark structure all promise good aging with a serious, firm aftertaste. Drink from 2020. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

90 Château la Garde 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Solid layers of tannin partner with black currant fruit. This is structured, dark and very dry at the moment, although it will give a more rounded character as it ages. Drink from 2018. Thiénot USA. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $45

90 Château Larrivet Haut-Brion 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This is firmly structured while still keeping plenty of fruit. Juicy black currants are balanced by some dusty tannins. It's an attractive, rich and concentrated wine that will develop well and over the medium-term. Drink from 2017. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

90 Château le Thil 2012 Pessac-Léognan. With smoky tannins and tangy acidity, this wine is solid, dense and full of toasty wood. Over this structure, black currant notes are fragrant and attractive. Drink from 2018. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

90 Château Picque Caillou 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Big structure underlies this wine, very firm and dark. It has layers of dry tannins, big fruit and concentrated structure. The dryness at the heart of the wine will allow it to age well with its powerful structure and juicy aftertaste. Drink from 2020. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

90 Domaine de Grandmaison 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This juicy wine is full of rich black currant and berry fruits. They dominate the structure, giving the acidity and freshness to the dark texture of tannins. The wine is coming into balance and likely to mature relatively quickly. Drink from 2018. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

89 Château Baret 2012 Pessac-Léognan. This wine is very fruity, full of red berries and crisp acidity. That goes with the more textured, tannic background to give a wine that has structure and some good potential for aging. Drink from 2018. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

89 Château Lafargue 2012 Pessac-Léognan. While this has some lean tannins, the wine offers ripe red fruit and berry character to balance. It's structured, still young and getting its tannins together. Drink this fresh, structured and juicy wine from 2018. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

89 Château le Pape 2012 Pessac-Léognan. Firmly smoky, strong wood-aged texture gives a solid structure. However, the wine has some juicy acidity that allows a fresher side to show through. At the end, though, the firm tannins dominate. Give this wine time and drink from 2020. Serge Doré Selections. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

POMEROL

97 Château Pétrus 2012 Pomerol. Another great wine from Pétrus, this has enormous depths without losing any of the fruit or freshness of Merlot in 2012. It's massive while also elegant, weighty, richly full-bodied and also structured. At this stage the wine does show some signs of wood aging, which will diminish as it ages. The fruitiness is deceptive because this wine demands aging. Drink from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

95 Château la Fleur-Pétrus 2012 Pomerol. This is a beautiful ripe wine with great tannins enveloped by the velvet texture and sumptuous fruit. The château, a neighbor of Château Pétrus, has produced a concentrated wine, with bountiful Merlot richness. It finishes with great fruitiness. Drink from 2022. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

95 Vieux Château Certan 2012 Pomerol. This wine is already so delicious, it's initially hard to find the structure. Packed with black fruits, it has velvet tannins that only slowly reveal their power. Layers of generous Merlot give the ripest black plum flavors. The wine is rich and the tannins well integrated, yet everything will age well. Drink from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** $NA

94 Château Hosanna 2012 Pomerol. Firm, closed and still tough, this wine has enormous potential. It's concentrated and impressively dense, dark with the fruits layered with acidity and tannins. It does have much of the bold fruit of the vintage that will develop gradually. For now, it is a brooding wine, waiting to come round. Drink from 2024. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

94 Château Trotanoy 2012 Pomerol. Dense and complex, this powerful wine has impressive



tannins and a solid structure. It does hold plenty of fruit, although at this stage you need to search for it. The character now is dark, dense and remote. It needs many years to bring out the rich black fruits and fresher acidity. Drink from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

93 Château Providence 2012 Pomerol. The small parcel of vines that makes up Providence has proven to be a stunning piece of Pomerol. This wine is all richness and structure, with a solid density and black plum fruits cut with acidity. It's generous, full in the mouth, solid with tannins at the back and opulent with fruit at the front. Drink from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

92 Château Nenin 2012 Pomerol. Big and rich, this is a solid, dark and dense wine. Power and ripe fruit dominate the opulent structure. Produced by the Delon family of Léoville Las Cases in Saint-Julien, it is a wine for aging. Drink from 2020, but the wine will be developing for more years after that. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

91 Château Clinet 2011 La Fleur de Clinet (Pomerol). This is a blend of grapes from different growers in Pomerol rather than a second wine of Château Clinet. It is made to be drunk young with its smooth tannins, generous texture and ripe Merlot fruits. It feels rich and sumptuous, a rounded wine that is lightly topped by tannins. Drink from 2017. Noble Wines. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** $50

90 Château Latour à Pomerol 2012 Pomerol. While the fruit is delicious, full of blackberry flavors, a powerful tannic core shows a firmer side to this wine. As the wine opens up, it becomes dense, concentrated, with ripe Merlot fruitiness. At the end, all is freshness and light. Drink from 2020. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

SAINT-ÉMILION

95 Château Ausone 2012 Saint-Émilion. This is a magnificent wine with an opulent structure and a finely perfumed character. It is dense with the ripest black fruits cushioned by the soft texture. A serious, denser side brings out a tannic core. It's elegant while also powerful and certainly needs to age. Drink from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $650

95 Château Cheval Blanc 2012 Saint-Émilion. With a wonderful 45% blending of fragrant Cabernet Franc, this is a sumptuous, perfumed wine. It's rich with a velvet texture that hides the dark tannins while bringing out the rich plum flavors. The dense texture is balanced by some fresh acidity and a fruity aftertaste. Drink this deceptively approachable wine from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

95 Le Dôme 2012 Saint-Émilion. A parcel of almost 100% Cabernet Franc gives this perfumed, classy wine. It's very structured, mineral-textured and darkly dense. Powerful and concentrated, this intense wine will develop into a major statement. Drink from 2019. World's End LLC. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $235

95 Vieux Château Mazerat 2012 Saint-Émilion. This is a grandiose wine with impressive dark tannins and swathes of black plum fruits. A hint of licorice and dark chocolate lies over the brooding, firm texture. Expect such a concentrated, solid and serious wine to age well. Drink from 2019. World's End LLC. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $130

94 Château Angélus 2012 Saint-Émilion. In its gold-embossed bottle to celebrate the elevation of Angélus to Premier Grand Cru Classé A in the Saint-Émilion hierarchy, this perfumed wine bursts from the glass. The tannins are totally enveloped by the ripe black plum and berry fruits. With 45% Cabernet Franc in the blend, it is rich and generous, with licorice and black chocolate flavors. Drink this opulent wine from 2022. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** $NA

94 Château Bélair-Monange 2012 Saint-Émilion. This is a perfumed and generous wine with great tannins and a strong minerality. This is the first year that wines from the former Château Magdelaine were also included in Bélair as the two estates were amalgamated. It's dense, complex, balanced in character yet still with fruitiness of the vintage. Drink from 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

93 Château Ausone 2012 La Chapelle d'Ausone (Saint-Émilion). The second wine of Château Ausone is impressive in its own right. It reflects the fruitier, Merlot side of the vineyard, with ripe black fruits coming through the tannins. The wood aging does show in a vanilla character that will disappear as it matures. It's ripe, full of juicy fruit and ready to age over the medium term. Drink from 2019. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $165

93 Château Quintus 2012 Saint-Émilion. The second release since the owners of Château Haut-Brion took over the property, this is very tannic and certainly extracted with its dark chocolate flavors. It's textured, dominated by Merlot and richly lush under the tough exterior. Drink from 2020 —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

93 Les Astéries 2012 Saint-Émilion. Very structured and packed with tannins, this has the weight to balance those qualities, promising layers of black fruits as it develops. There's a mineral character here, the tannins in suspension. The aftertaste brings out delicious, lightly salty acidity. Drink from 2018. World's End LLC. ***Cellar Selection***. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $200

92 Château Dassault 2010 Le D de Dassault (Saint-Émilion). This is a second wine from Château Dassault, the estate owned by descendants of legendary French airplane designer Marcel Dassault. It's a true second wine, made from younger vines on the estate. Structured and dense, it also remains fruity and full of ripe berry fruits. Drink this attractive wine from 2018. Noble Wines. —R.V.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $40

92 Château Quinault L'Enclos 2012 Saint-Émilion. This vineyard is a small enclave of vines surrounded by the city of Libourne. Now made by the Cheval Blanc wine team, it shows great style and richness. Attractive tannins and acidity are integrated into the rounded blackberry fruits. It's a wine for medium-term aging, so drink from 2017. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

92 Le Carré 2012 Saint-Émilion. Rounded and rich, this generous, full-bodied wine comes from a single parcel in the heart of Saint-Émilion. Black fruits are structured with dense tannins and a firm tension between ripeness and dryness. The wine is powerful, finishing with pepper and spice. Drink from 2018. World's End LLC. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $135

91 Château Cheval Blanc 2012 Le Petit Cheval (Saint-Émilion). This second wine of Château Cheval Blanc is ripe, dominated by soft, juicy Merlot. It is rich, full of jammy red berry fruits and finely integrated, gentle tannins. It's full bodied, generous and developing well. Drink from 2017. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $NA

91 Château Quintus 2012 Le Dragon de Quintus (Saint-Émilion). This second wine of the Haut-Brion's newly acquired Château Quintus is rich, with layers of black plums and dense juicy tannins. A dark Merlot-dominated wine, it's smooth and likely to be ready soon. Drink from 2017. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $NA

90 Château Laforge 2012 Saint-Émilion. This very complete wine offers dark tannins, ripe berry fruits and a velvet texture. It's rich, relying on blackberry and black plum flavors and a dense structure. Mouth-filling, it delivers delicious fragrant acidity at the end. Drink from 2017. World's End LLC. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $65

90 Château Moulin Saint-Georges 2012 Saint-Émilion. Fine structure combines with bright fruits and well-wrought tannins that give density. Rich berry fruits shine through the texture,

conveying a ripe character to this concentrated and ageworthy wine. Drink from 2018. —R.V.
abv: NA **Price:** $35

89 Cheval Quancard 2012 1844 (Saint-Émilion). Heavily Merlot-weighted, this offers rich while still-fresh fruit. With dense tannins and an impressive blend of acidity and dark structure, it shows the fruitiness of the vintage while keeping an ability to age. Drink now, but better to wait until 2017. Cheval Quancard. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $26

SPAIN

WHITE WINES

RÍAS BAIXAS

90 La Caña 2013 Albariño (Rías Baixas). For full review see page 100.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $18

89 Adegas Gran Vinum 2013 Esencia Diviña Albariño (Rías Baixas). Fleshy white-fruit aromas of peach and nectarine are entirely appealing. This is round, nicely balanced and a little creamy, with melon, mineral and vanilla flavors on the palate. A similar finish with slightly more creaminess closes it out. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $23

88 Chan de Rosas 2013 Albariño (Rías Baixas). Pleasant peach and melon aromas are clean and a touch dusty and leesy. Fresh malic acidity keeps this vital, while apple, peach and minerally flavors run long on the finish. The Spanish Acquisition. —M.S.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $17

VALDEORRAS

90 Avancia 2013 Godello (Valdeorras). For full review see page 99.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $31

89 Avancia 2013 Cuveé De O Godello (Valdeorras). Dusty pear and apple aromas show some slate and minerality. This is full and easy on the palate, with acidic bite that's not aggressive. Minerally pear and melon flavors finish long, dry and with an echo of slate. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.
abv: 13% **Price:** $18

88 Valdesil 2012 Sobre Lías Godello (Valdeorras). Apple, nectarine, lees and briny aromas steer this Godello toward a round, full palate. Slightly bitter flavors of melon and peach finish much like the wine starts—briny and leesy. This is also pithy tasting, like the inside of a grapefruit peel. Valkyrie Selections. —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $25

87 Valdesil 2013 Montenovo Godello (Valdeorras). Briny aromas suggest pickled white fruits and even some sauerkraut. In the mouth, this is tight for a fairly sizable wine. Dry peach and bitter melon flavors settle on citrus pith, while the finish is long and leesy. Valkyrie Selections. —M.S.
abv: 13% **Price:** $18

87 Viña Somoza 2013 Sobre Lias Godello (Valdeorras). Leesy on the nose like the name implies, this Godello smells creamy, with notes of apple and melon. The palate shows moderate citric acidity but nothing scouring, while flavors of ripe apple, orange and powdered sugar finish leesy and peachy. Winebow. —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $20

BIERZO

90 Bodegas Estephanía 2013 Tilenus Godello (Bierzo). Stone-fruit and melon aromas are crystal clean and inviting as can be. The palate blends citrus pith with creamy richness and minerality. Flavors of orange and white grapefruit are a touch pithy, while the finish brings weight, solidity and confirmation. Everything that's good about Godello is on display. Classic Wines. —M.S.
abv: 13% **Price:** $20

86 Encanto 2013 Charm Godello (Bierzo). Clean peach and melon aromas are basic but nice. The texture on this Godello is a bit oily and grabby but good, while tangerine, nectarine and peach flavors finish with some weight but also enough citric acidity to maintain freshness. Vinamericas Selections. —M.S.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $14

85 Alvarez de Toledo 2013 Godello (Bierzo). Plump melon and stone fruit aromas are a touch broken down and mealy. This Godello feels fleshy and round, with pulpy weight. Tangerine and tropical fruit flavors weigh in on the heavy side, while the finish is chunky and pithy in flavor. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.S.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $14

RUEDA

88 Rejadorada 2013 Verdejo (Rueda). A mix of citrus and tropical fruit aromas is clean and minerally, which is what you want from basic Verdejo. A fresh, stony, citrusy body and flavors of white grapefruit, lime and green apple finish with minerality and brightness. Regal Wine Imports Inc. —M.S.
abv: 13% **Price:** $14

87 Protos 2013 Verdejo (Rueda). Leesy aromas of pear and melon are friendly and fresh. This Verdejo is lean, citric and drawn on the palate, with lemon, white pineapple and green apple flavors.



A tangy, tight, juicy, acidic palate ensures that this ends with crispness and snap. Aviva Vino. —M.S.
abv: 13% **Price:** $15

86 Rolland & Galarreta 2013 Verdejo (Rueda). Chunky, oxidized aromas of melon and white stone fruits settle on heavy and bland. There's acidic snap to this Verdejo but also a rubbery feel to the palate. Yeasty flavors of baked apple and peach finish lightly oxidized and almondy. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.
abv: 13% **Price:** $23

TERRA ALTA

88 Celler Bàrbara Forés 2013 Blanc (Terra Alta). This Catalonian white is 98% Garnatxa Blanca (with a few drops of Viognier), and it's light on the nose, with mild apple, melon and pear aromas. A mix of melony weight and lime-like acidity leads to a ripe flavor profile with banana, honeydew and powdered sugar notes. A dab of honey and a touch of sweet almond work the finish on this easy-going quaffer. Aviva Vino. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $16

88 Edetària 2013 Via Edetana (Terra Alta). Waxy, dusty aromas of stone fruits and honey are typical of Garnatxa Blanca, although this contains 30% Viognier as well. A citrusy, direct palate with cutting acidity sets up lemon, tangerine and green-apple flavors. Only on the finish does this taste mildly yeasty and slightly buttery. Matador-vino LLC. —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $17

88 Las Colinas Del Ebro 2013 Garnatxa Blanca (Terra Alta). Yeasty aromas of green melon and apple are clean and stony. This Garnatxa Blanca is juicy, fresh, well cut and minerally in feel, with citrusy flavors of lime and tangerine. The same goes for the finish, which is crisp, light and steady. Grapes of Spain. ***Best Buy***. —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $12

87 Finca Hispana 2013 Joven Garnacha Blanca (Terra Alta). Neutral on the nose except for a whiff of apple, this is a wine to drink now. A round, pulpy palate is balanced by citric acidity, while waxy flavors of baked apple and peach finish briny and round, with a hint of green banana. C & B International Trading Group. ***Best Buy***. —M.S.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $10

OTHER WHITE WINES

89 Terra do Castelo 2013 Godello (Ribeiro). Apple, pear and melon aromas are pure, clean and inviting. Tight, focused and succinct on the palate, this wine offers apple, nectarine and peach flavors that continue onto the finish without breaking down. Hand Picked Selections. —M.S.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $19

86 Ressò 2013 Old Vines Garnacha Blanca (Catalunya). Aromas of radiator dust, lime and green apple are a bit heavy and scattershot. However the palate is tangy and lean, with cutting acidity. Lead flavors of waxy apricot are backed by orange and lime notes, while the finish is dry and waxy, with a yeasty, leesy flavor bolstered by snappy acidity. Winesellers Ltd. ***Best Buy***. —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $8

85 Ossian 2013 Quintaluna Verdejo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla y León). Yeasty, bready aromas lack the citric kick and minerality that top Rueda whites deliver in spades. The palate is dilute but slightly creamy, while yeasty flavors are low on fruit and finish with a note of gardenia flower. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.
abv: 13% **Price:** $20

CAVA

89 Castellroig NV Brut Rosat (Cava). Smoky and a bit hard smelling at first, this rosé Cava is more rustic and earthy up front than pure and polished. In the mouth, it's medium in body and fresh, with direct acidity. Flavors of peppery cherry and red plum finish juicy and honest, with a hint of pink grapefruit. Regal Wine Imports Inc. —M.S.
abv: 12% **Price:** $19

88 Bohigas NV Brut Rosat (Cava). Dusty, creamy aromas of yeast, oak and vanilla open this rosé. The palate is more crisp and pure, with scouring acidity and overall tightness. Cranberry, red plum and briny flavors finish fresh and citric, with a hint of stony minerality. Polaner Selections. —M.S.
abv: 12% **Price:** $17

88 Codorníu 2011 Gran Codorniu (Cava). Citrus peel and stone-fruit aromas blend with dusty, yeasty notes and a touch of spiced cherry on the nose of this juicy, fresh Spanish sparkler. Cherry, raspberry and red-plum flavors hint at elegance before finishing dry, long and lightly peppery in flavor. Aveniù Brands, Inc. —M.S.
abv: 12% **Price:** $20

88 Marques de Gelida 2011 Brut Reserva Pinot Noir (Cava). This salmon-hued rosé Cava opens with aromas of cotton candy, vanilla and yeast. On the tongue, it's simple in structure and feels a lot like citrus juice with bubbles. Flavors of orange and nectarine finish crisp and with a note of apricot. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.
abv: 12% **Price:** $18

87 Sumarroca NV Yá Cuvée 23 Brut Rosé (Cava). A mix of smoke and toast blends with fresh, crisp citrus aromas on the nose. That's followed by a foamy, reactive palate with flavors of pink grapefruit, orange, pepper and caramel. This remains foamy on the finish, which is peppery and slightly bitter in flavor. Vinos Libres. —M.S.
abv: 11.5% **Price:** $18

SHERRY

94 Alvear 2011 de Añada Pedro Ximénez (Montilla-Moriles). This PX from the Montilla-Moriles D.O. is always outstanding. This vintage opens with aromas of burnt apricot, orange rind, caramel and simmering brown sugar. It's sticky almost the point of being cloying, while intense, layered flavors of toffee, coffee and brown sugar go on for miles. Only 300 cases of this great-value wine were made, so act fast and buy a few 375s if you can. Jorge Ordoñez Selections. ***Editors' Choice***. —M.S.
abv: 17% **Price:** $23/375 ml

92 Bodegas Dios Baco S.L. NV Oxford 1.970 Pedro Ximénez Sherry. For full review see page 96.
abv: 17% **Price:** $18/500 ml

90 Delgado Zuleta NV Premium Fino Sherry. Intense, nutty, yeasty aromas are briny and a touch creamy. This has a tight, pure, round palate with salty nectarine, apricot and nut flavors. Walnut oil and white pepper notes grace a direct, lively finish. Frontier Wine Imports. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $16

89 Bodegas Dios Baco S.L. NV Riá Pitá (Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda). For full review see page 101. ***Best Buy***.
abv: 15% **Price:** $12

88 Delgado Zuleta NV La Goya (Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda). Oxidized stone fruit, flor, barrel lacquer and vanilla aromas are sharp but true for Manzanilla. A layered palate is lively and acidic, with nutty, creamy flavors of brined apricot. A rich-feeling finish is cut by zesty acidity, and as a whole this Sherry gets it right. Frontier Wine Imports. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $16/375 ml

87 Delgado Zuleta NV Premium (Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda). Smooth, nutty aromas include vanilla and flor scents. This has a dry palate with flavors of orange, lemon, salt and peanuts. It's crisp but metallic in feel, with angular acidity and a finish that's salty in flavor and slightly oily in texture. Frontier Wine Imports. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $16

87 Bodegas Dios Baco S.L. NV Buleria Fino Sherry. Initial aromas of aged cheese, gym shoes and overall funk are more complicated than easy. This is lacks a center point on the palate, while flavors of briny stone fruits are drawn, buttery and oxidized. A briny apricot note rises up on the finish. CIV/USA. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $25

87 **Delgado Zuleta NV Premium Pedro Ximénez Sherry.** Simple brown sugar scents make for a monotone bouquet. Creamy and thick on the palate, this PX tastes largely of maple syrup and toffee. Overall, it delivers sweetness and toffee notes but not much complexity. Frontier Wine Imports. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $25

86 **Delgado Zuleta NV Premium Moscatel Sherry.** Despite some heat and burn to the nose, there's nothing not to like about aromas of pecan pie and toffee. This Moscatel sweetie is solid in feel, but mostly around the edges; the middle palate is a bit weak. Flavors of brown sugar and caramel are more sweet and simple than complex. Frontier Wine Imports. —M.S.
abv: 17.5% **Price:** $16

ARGENTINA

MALBEC

93 **Trapiche 2011 Terroir Series Coletto Single Vineyard El Peral Malbec (Mendoza).** Blackberry and cassis aromas are so subtle, balanced and clean that they barely register while luring you in. An elastic, wide palate has firm, slightly abrasive tannins that should mellow with more time in the bottle, while blackberry, chocolate and spice flavors finish long and smooth, with a hint of raisin. Drink from 2016 through 2021. The Wine Group. ***Editors' Choice***. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $50

92 **Trapiche 2011 Terroir Series Orellana Single Vineyard Malbec (La Consulta).** Smoky blackberry aromas hint at raw charcoal and hickory. A deep, lush mouthfeel is mildly tannic, while toasty flavors of chocolate, herbs and menthol brush shoulders with blackberry and spice. This is big, deep, fruity and oaky on the finish. More time will only help it out; drink from 2016–2023. The Wine Group. ***Cellar Selection***. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $50

92 **Trivento 2012 Golden Reserve Malbec (Luján de Cuyo).** Compact and grapy up front, this is showing pure berry power on the nose. Lush and intense but also bright and balanced in feel, this Malbec is pumping out fleshy blackberry flavors offset by meaty notes. A full, mellow finish is deep and pure, with absorbed oak. Drink through 2020. Banfi Vintners. —M.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $21

91 **Durigutti 2012 HD Malbec (Mendoza).** Blackberry, black cherry and crusty, toasty aromas of sawdust and shoe polish make for a bullish bouquet. This Malbec is concentrated and dark in color, flavor and feel. Blackberry, pepper, graphite and herbal flavors turn more complex and towards cola and tea on the finish. Drink through 2020. Elixir Wine Group. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $20

91 **Enrique Foster 2007 Limited Edition Malbec (Luján de Cuyo).** For full review see page 98.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

91 **Melipal 2012 Malbec (Mendoza).** A rich, oaky opening salvo includes aromas of maple, graphite and raw wood atop blackberry and boysenberry. A full, loud, acidic palate is oaky but balanced and considerate. Toasty, woody, minty flavors ride high on a berry fruit base, while oak is more than prominent on the finish. Drink through 2020. The Artisan Collection. —M.S.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $20

91 **Trapiche 2011 Terroir Series Ambrosia Single Vineyard Gualtallary Malbec (Mendoza).** This opens with a gaseous blast of cheesy oak and volatility, although airing settles it down. In the mouth, tartaric bite blends with chewy, rubbery black-fruit tannins, while flavors of blackberry, cassis and coffee end with toasty bitterness and chocolaty notes. Drink through 2022. The Wine Group. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $50

90 **Bressia 2012 Monteagrelo Malbec (Mendoza).** Ripe berry and plum aromas are full and good. This Malbec has an easy mouthfeel that's weighty but well defined, with modest tannins and integrated acidity. Ripe cassis and berry flavors finish with a touch of creamy oak. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $27

90 **Cielo y Tierra 2007 Don Juan Nahuel Reserva Malbec (Mendoza).** Right off the bat this gives off a saucy whiff of grass and green along with creamy red-berry notes and raisin. The palate is wide and tannic, with oak resin that hasn't been absorbed. Flavors of prune, raisin, raspberry, plum and herbs show a lactic note, while spice notes and a reprise of green carry the finish. The Sorting Table. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $46

90 **Trapiche 2012 Broquel Malbec (Mendoza).** For full review see page 100.
abv: 14% **Price:** $18

89 **Chakana 2013 Ayni Malbec (Uco Valley).** Heavy oak and spice aromas are the primary greeting on this muscular, thick, well-made Malbec. Following the lead set by the bouquet, this tastes of spicy oak, chocolate and creamy blackberry. Clove, nutmeg and chocolate flavors drive the finish. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $36



89 **Famiglia Mosso 2012 Malbec (Mendoza).** Although this shows slightly fiery, hot notes on the nose, offsetting black-fruit and spice aromas are helpful. This has a rustic, meaty feel with hard tannins, while black-fruit and herbal flavors are loud and finish with earth notes, a hint of prune and warmth. In every way this comes across as a warm-climate Malbec. Copa Fina Imports CA. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $25

89 **Pascual Toso 2012 Reserve Malbec (Mendoza).** Full and ripe, this also smells a touch raisiny as well as green. Jammy and extracted in feel, with plenty of oak resin to wade through, this tastes woody, with related flavors of vanilla and cream mixing with berry and cassis. It's ripe, tannic and woody, but very good in that style. Guarachi Wine Partners. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $21

88 **Luigi Bosca 2012 Malbec (Mendoza).** This is stalky and rustic on the nose, with Band-Aid and leather aromas accenting berry and plum scents. In the mouth, it is both jammy and a bit abrasive; burnt flavors of plum, raspberry and blackberry finish with herbal influences and raw tannins. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $27

88 **Riglos 2012 Quinto Malbec (Tupungato).** Jammy, reduced aromas of cassis, blueberry and animal hide lead to a juicy, fresh palate that's not too thick or concentrated. Blackberry and blueberry flavors are lightly peppered, while the finish is quick and light for Malbec. This is a new wine that aims at freshness and simple fruit more than power and weight. Paul Hobbs Imports. —M.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $19

87 **Ferllen 2011 Reserve Malbec (Mendoza).** Berry and plum aromas are spicy and saucy, with secondary notes of tomato and oregano. Snappy on the palate, this live-wire Malbec is a bit aggressive and acidic. Toasty oak and mint flavors accent fresh red-berry fruit prior to an energetic yet woody finish that's raw feeling but fair. SPW Importers. —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $18

87 **Rutini 2012 Trumpeter Malbec (Mendoza).** This friendly wine offers fresh, jammy berry and cherry aromas. The palate has a bit of grit and stickiness to it, while blackberry, black cherry and boysenberry flavors are ripe, sweet, not pushy and ultimately satisfying. Graziano Imports. ***Best Buy.*** —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $11

87 **Sur de los Andes 2013 Premium Malbec (Mendoza).** Jammy, soft blueberry aromas are a touch green. This is syrupy, heavy and sticky on the palate, with chocolate, prune and peppery flavors. Tannic and heavy on the finish, this is an overweight Malbec that's lush to the point of being fat. W. Direct. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $38

87 **Tupun 2012 Reserve Malbec (Tupungato).** Dark-berry aromas are crisp and show a note of minerality as well as barrel char. This is firm, juicy and modest in structure, with flavors of blackberry and cassis touched up by some oak. A non-pushy finish with a hint of mocha is a good close. Craveiro Importers. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $15

86 **Bodega Renacer 2012 Punto Final Reserva Malbec (Mendoza).** After a huge blast of mocha opens the show, there isn't a lot hiding behind the curtain. The palate is big, sticky and rubbery in feel, while flavors of baked berry, chocolate, oak and coffee finish chewy but also briny and herbal. Winebow. —M.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $21

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

89 **Bodega Atamisque 2011 Catalpa Old Vines Cabernet Sauvignon (Tupungato).** Blackberry, rubber, leather and charred aromas make for a powerful nose. On the palate, this Uco Valley Cab is deep and chewy, with balancing acidity and controlled tannins. Baked berry, savory oak, leather and spice flavors finish dark and earthy. Overall, this shows many positives and pushes the Argentinean Cabernet field in the right direction. Wine Bridge Imports. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $19

88 **Ferllen 2011 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza).** Smoky aromas of bacon and rubber blend with cherry and plum scents to form a good bouquet. This has a fair, fresh mouthfeel with tannic grip. Leafy flavors of plum and red currant are accented by spicy, dry, woody notes, while the finish is lightly green and oaky, with lasting spice. SPW Importers. —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $18

88 **Rutini 2011 Encuentro Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza).** A fairly oaky bouquet with overt wood grain, vanilla and creamy aromas includes cherry and plum scents. A mostly fresh, choppy palate is a bit rough, while currant and spiced-plum flavors end with woody, medicinal accents. Overall this works well. Graziano Imports. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $19

87 **Los Haroldos 2011 Reserva de Familia Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza).** Raspberry and plum aromas are woody and narrow in scope. This Cabernet is medium in body but also a bit sticky and resiny. Candied blackberry and black cherry flavors are slightly medicinal, while the finish is oaky, with a lactic flavor and a touch of heat. Hildago Imports. —M.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $20

86 **Fat Gaucho 2011 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza).** Dark, rubbery, generic berry aromas are a touch cheesy but full. This feels tannic and roasted, while flavors of cassis and berry come across lightly herbal and baked. Fat Gaucho Wines, LLC. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $13

86 **Piattelli 2011 Premium Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Luján de Cuyo).** Saucy aromas of molasses, baked beans, tomato and asphalt are gritty. Ditto the palate, which is snappy and hard around the edges. Flavors of leafy, spicy plum and cherry are mildly green and herbal, as is the finish. Vinocopia. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $16

86 **Ruca Malen 2011 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza).** Earthy, spicy aromas of juniper, bell pepper and oak cover up slightly underripe berry scents. This has an acceptable level of tannic scratch and peppery, herbal berry fruit flavors. Like the rest of this Cab, the finish is lightly herbal, green-leaning and hard. Opici Wines. —M.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $19

RED BLENDS

93 **Mascota 2011 Unánime Gran Vino Tinto (Mendoza).** Deep and lush up front, this blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec and Cab Franc offers highly appealing aromas of blackberry and toast. Dense, layered and hefty on the palate, this extracted but well-balanced blend piles on blueberry, black plum, cassis and toast flavors. On the finish, darker notes of espresso and bitter chocolate take over. Drink now through 2018. Saranty Imports. ***Editors' Choice.*** —M.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $25

92 **Andeluna 2011 Pasionado Cuatro Cepas (Mendoza).** Intense, concentrated aromas of blackberry and cassis are cool and compact. Firm on the palate, with controlled tannins, this blend of Malbec, Merlot and Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc tastes of barrel spice, fine herbs and ripe blackberry and cassis. It's toasty and minty on the finish. Drink through 2019. San Francisco Wine Exchange. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $60

92 **Finca Sophenia 2011 Synthesis The Blend (Tupungato).** On first impression, barrel aromas of hickory and clove are dominant, but with time minerally, toasty blackberry and cassis scents rise up. This blend of Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot is ripe but fresh; overall the mouthfeel is excellent. Chocolaty oak flavors ride on top of blackberry, cassis and mocha, while overt oak persists on a cuddly finish. Drink this dark, sexy wine now through 2020. The Country Vintner-Craft and Estate. —M.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $45

92 **Nunum 2011 Red (Uco Valley).** Taking the Huarpe name for "sorcerer", Nunum is a Vines of Mendoza wine blended from Malbec, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. It's concentrated, smoky

and rubbery-smelling, with blackberry, cassis, licorice and herbal scents. Fresh, lush and pure in the mouth, this delivers big doses of blackberry, cassis and licorice flavors. Generous through the finish, this is typical of Argentina's modern style of red blends: ripe and giving. Drink through 2020. The Vines of Mendoza. —M.S.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** $45

90 Tupun 2011 Vulcano Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon-Cabernet Franc (Tupungato). Ripe berry aromas are strongly supported by sweet, oaky scents of mocha, vanilla and plastic. This is a 50/50 blend of Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc; it's creamy, thick and lactic in feel, with oaky blackfruit flavors that are sweet and tasty but hard to define. A toasty, smooth, creamy finish tastes of blackberry and vanilla. InterBev. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $21

88 Bodega Patritti 2009 Primogénito Blend (Patagonia). Floral berry and cherry aromas are direct and familiar. Given that this is six years past vintage, it's still fierce and raw in feel, with hard tannins. Medicinal cherry and chocolate flavors finish with black pepper heat and menthol burn. Patagonia Wine Company. —M.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $30

88 Chaman 2012 Red Blend (La Consulta). Floral red-fruit aromas are slightly medicinal and suggestive of cherry cough drop. A healthy, chewy mouthfeel and flavors of plum and raspberry end with textural solidity and modest refinement. This is an interesting mix of 55% Petit Verdot with Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc, and a dash of Malbec. Vine Connections. —M.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $20

88 Piattelli 2010 Trinità Grand Reserve (Luján de Cuyo). Dark, minty, inky aromas of blackberry are rugged. Same for the palate, which is pinched and rubbery, with grabby tannins. Flavors of toasted, blackened berry fruits are chocolaty and well oaked. Raw heat and minty, coffee flavors rev up the finish on this Malbec-led blend. Vinocopia. —M.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $26

CALIFORNIA

PINOT NOIR

96 Dutton-Goldfield 2012 Devil's Gulch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Marin County). For full review see page 93. ***Editors' Choice***.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $68

95 Talley 2012 Rincon Vineyard Estate Bottled Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley). This delivers inviting aromas of a cherry pie with buttery crust that's made more serious with pencil-lead minerality and a slightly sanguine touch. Flavors are ripe yet restrained. Raspberry, pomegranate and cranberry fruit lead to burnt orange, singed lemon, rose petals and violet, finishing on lingering Bing cherries with just enough tannins and tartness. —M.K.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $60

94 Black Kite 2012 Stony Terrace Block Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). Bright red cherry and rich black cherry aromas are followed by ripe, plummy flavors in this well-balanced, medium-bodied and absolutely delicious wine. It offers fruit complexity, a touch of spicy oak, firm texture with good tannic grip and a lingering, enticing finish. ***Editors' Choice***. —J.G.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $60

94 Byron 2012 Monument Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). For full review see page 93.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $60

94 Gary Farrell 2012 Hallberg Vineyard Clone 777 Oak Tank Fermented 17% Whole Cluster Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 94. ***Editors' Choice***.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $65

94 Gary Farrell 2012 Rochioli Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 94. ***Editors' Choice***.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** $70

94 Guarachi Family 2013 Sun Chase Vineyard Petaluma Gap Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). For full review see page 94. ***Editors' Choice***.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $75

94 Talley 2012 Stone Corral Vineyard Proprietor Grown Pinot Noir (Edna Valley). Aromas of a raspberry torte with flaky crust mix with cardamom and marjoram spices on another compelling wine from the region's historic producer. Tart cranberries kick off the palate, followed by wet slate and graphite minerality in the midpalate that barely hide riper fruits. It culminates in a cola-laced finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $54

93 Balo 2012 Avenging Angel Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). This vital, athletic wine is tempting now but will be best to drink after 2018. It has a dark color with a red-brick rim and opulent fruit aromas. Tangy, mouth-filling cherry and raspberry flavors come with a vibrant, tannic, lively texture. It's a bit tight to enjoy now, but will mellow and mature in the cellar. ***Cellar Selection***. —J.G.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $55

93 Byron 2012 Julia's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). For full review see page 95.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $45

93 Foley 2012 Bar Lazy S Ranch Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Spice and earth combine on the nose, with cinnamon, root beer, bloody meats, crushed cloves and graphite all spun together. Cranberry juice and brown spice open the palate, which is refreshing and deep, thanks to a seaweed-driven maritime element and a sautéed cherry finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $55

93 Gary Farrell 2012 Rochioli-Allen Vineyards Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 95.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $70

93 Talley 2012 Rosemary's Vineyard Estate Bottled Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley). Bing cherry fruit and scarlet rose petals join with Red Hot cinnamon candies on the nose of this producer's upper-tier release. Though ripe red cherries, pomegranate and more red fruit open up around a core of brown spice, the tannins are still wound tight, and will unfurl gracefully into mushrooms, tanned leather and game from 2017 to 2024. ***Cellar Selection***. —M.K.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $70

93 Wrath 2012 Pommard 4/777 Pinot Noir (Monterey). Light in color and density, the wine welcomes the nose with a warm strawberry approachability then delivers a savory side of sagebrush, green olive and dried tart cranberry. Forest floor elements of mace and mushroom are cut with barely ripe red fruit, licorice and pencil lead, altogether showing lots of vibrant energy. —M.K.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $35

93 Zepaltas 2013 La Cruz Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). The producer has a long history sourcing from this well-respected vineyard in the heart of the Petaluma Gap. The winemaker's deft understanding of the area's promise speaks volumes in this lightly colored, lovingly crafted and beguiling Pinot. Soft and subtle, it teases in dried cherries and cinnamon-clove baking spices. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.
abv: 13.1% **Price:** $44

92 Amici 2012 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Earthy, tart cherry and strawberry paint a pretty picture in this aromatic, inviting wine, a bold, fruity offering accented by luscious streaks of herb. Well-integrated and composed, dustings of cocoa and cola spice build steam on the finish, the overall package just lightly oaked. —V.B.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $35

92 Dolin 2012 Rincon Vineyard Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley). This wine is all about subtlety, with the reserved nose opening up into dried strawberries, rose petals, sweet sagebrush and clove. The palate is driven by texture, with the light red fruit touching on raspberry and pomegranate, the tannins reminiscent of cranberry peels, and a sense of cinnamon emerging on the finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $45

92 Foley 2012 Barrel Select Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Caper berry, turned earth, blistered cherry tomato and puttanesca sauce aromas lead the nose on this top-end Pinot from Bill Foley's

eponymous winery. It's wildly flavorful on the palate, offering perfectly ripe red fruit alongside woody herbs of oregano, thyme and rosemary, then leading into darkly elegant elements of black licorice, cardamom and chai spices. —M.K.
abv: 13.7% **Price:** $60

92 Foley 2012 JA Ranch Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Pomegrante, black slate and the savory kick of sautéed morel mushrooms make for a strong nose. Savory elements also lead the palate with cherry tomatoes and a peppery spice, rounded out by strong tannins, cherry skin tartness and crushed cloves. —M.K.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $55

92 Presqu'ile 2012 Steiner Creek Vineyard Pinot Noir (San Luis Obispo County). For full review see page 96. ***Cellar Selection***.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** $48

92 Terlato 2012 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 97.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $60

91 Block Nine 2013 Caiden's Vineyards Pinot Noir (California). For full review see page 101. ***Best Buy***.
abv: 13.1% **Price:** $15

91 Dragonette 2012 Fiddlestix Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). A sharply seasoned nose of mace and allspice decorate the dark raspberry fruit and scarlet rose petals of this single-vineyard bottling by the Buellton-based winery. The palate presents black cardamom-laced, squeezed berry flavors, yet this wine is all about being fresh and lively on the palate, where bright acidity zings from beginning through the lasting finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $54

91 Foley 2012 T Anchor Ranch Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Raspberry, cinnamon, pine sap and eucalyptus combine for a memorable nose on this wine, which shows very strong acidity on the mouth-watering and lively palate. Flavors reflect the nose, with tart raspberry and cranberry picking up some eucalyptus oil, brown spice and leather character as well. —M.K.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $55

91 Gary Farrell 2012 Stiling Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Aromas of baked sour cherry tart precede pleasing wafts of violet and lavender. From a vineyard planted largely to a field selection of the Swan clone, it offers an expected earthiness and spiciness that intrigues around a core of balanced tension between fruit, acid and oak. —V.B.
abv: 13.8% **Price:** $55

91 Ram's Gate 2012 Estate Pinot Noir (Carneros). From an estate vineyard site run by one of the region's finest farmers, this Pinot is intense and vibrant in juicy red cherry and raspberry, with earthiness at its core. Exuberant and robust on the palate, it puts its time in oak on full display, and finishes light and bright. —V.B.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $76

91 Wrath 2012 KW Ranch Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands). There's a wild herbaceousness on the nose of this wine that gains aromatic complexity from peppermint candy canes and sour cherry fruits. A menthol sense invades the palate, making it tingle pleasantly, with flavors of dried cherries and licorice leading into a long, exciting finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $49

91 Zepaltas 2012 Devoto Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This remains a vineyard site to watch, a spot within the Sebastopol Hills section now widely being called West Sonoma Coast. The area is also known for heirloom apples, much of which go into artisanal cider. Weighty and inconceivably bright, the Pinot is layered in fresh cranberry and earthy pomegranate, dusted in baking spice and structured in firm tannins. About half of the wine went through whole-cluster fermentation. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $45

90 Balo 2012 Estate Suitcase 828 Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). Made from 100% Pinot Noir Clone 828, this has the classic red and black cherry aromas and flavors, plus a firm texture with fine tannins and medium body. The acidity and tannins seem to take over the fruit character as it tapers off and leads to a leaner finish. Best after 2017. ***Cellar Selection***. —J.G.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** $38

90 Gary Farrell 2012 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 99.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $55

90 Krutz 2012 Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). A compelling wine, this combines wonderful aromas of forest floor, clove and pomegranate with flavors suggesting cranberry and red cherry shaded by rosemary. It is medium bodied, mostly soft in texture and mature in flavor. —J.G.
abv: 13.7% **Price:** $35

90 Line 39 2013 Pinot Noir (California). For full review see page 101. ***Best Buy***.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $11

90 Siduri 2012 Lingenfelder Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). There's an intensity of cola-cinnamon spice and clove within the aromas and flavors of this single-vineyard designate, intriguing invites to explore further. Pure, crisp and focused raspberry and earth follow, with a subtle use of oak that allows the fruit and varietal exoticness to speak. —V.B.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $48

90 Siduri 2012 Parsons' Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Damp forest floor give this wine a strong character of earthiness and wintery, savory notes, surrounded by intense black cherry, oak and firm, sizable tannins. Enjoyable now, the wine also shows promise for the future, able to relax through 2020. ***Cellar Selection***. —V.B.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $49

90 Siduri 2012 Van der Kamp Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Mountain). From an unusual site long sourced by the producer, this vintage carries through in terms of intensity of flavor. Black tea and spice-tinged pomegranate suround a weighty structure of velvety tannins. Explosive dark cherry and raspberry complete the picture. —V.B.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $48

90 Two Sisters 2012 Lindsay's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). For full review see page 101.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $75

90 Zepaltas 2013 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). The winemaker puts a light touch on the oak here, ratcheting it down to 30% new, all French, preserving a freshness of cherry, cranberry and earthy herb. A blend of three vineyard sites, including the single-vineyard designate, Nunes, the wine is well-integrated and balanced, offering an intriguing tartness on the finish. —V.B.
abv: 13.7% **Price:** $32

90 Zepaltas 2013 Nunes Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). A kirsch-like liqueur comes to the fore on the palate, before dried rose and herb demand attention of their own. From dry-farmed fruit, this Pinot is light in oak presence and weight, finishing pretty and refined. —V.B.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $44

89 Anaba 2012 Soberanes Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands). The Sonoma winery heads south to source fruit from this vineyard jointly owned by the Pisoni and Franscioni families. The nose offers cherry pastry, black olive, sandalwood and graphite, and the palate presents flavors of pomegranate seeds and cranberry-orange juice across finely grained tannins. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $46

89 Balo 2012 Estate Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). While generous and deep in flavor, this is restrained in texture and plays back and forth between ripe and crisp. It smells like dried plums, orange blossoms and pomegranate, but tastes more like black cherry with raspberry. It's medium bodied and softens on the finish. —J.G.
abv: 13.8% **Price:** $45

89 Lincourt 2012 Willie Mae Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Named after vintner Bill Foley's aunt, this wine's nose is inviting with warm aromas of gingerbread, cherry and Red Hot candies. A licorice-cherry element carries the palate, with some

chocolate and mint, proving quite light and refreshing. —M.K.
abv: 13.8% **Price:** $50

89 Roblar 2013 Gold Collection Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). This dark and savory nose blends dried cranberry, orange peels, woody mushrooms and rose-petal potpourri. Flavors are strongly sanguine at first, starting with iron before morphing into dark chocolate. The finish comes on quite bitter and tart, without much overt ripeness. —M.K.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $40

89 Siduri 2012 Ewald Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Smoky and earthy, this is robust Pinot, brooding in dark, baked plum. Fuller bodied in style, it's lush and dense on the palate, with a murky, forest-floor streak that's both bewildering and bewitching. The finish is thick in toasty oak. —V.B.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $49

88 Jamieson Ranch 2013 Light Horse Pinot Noir (California). A smoky, oaky aroma leads to meaty flavors with notes of rhubarb and red cherries. The texture is on the soft side and the body is medium. On the finish those oaky notes meld with the fruit for a soft finale. The grapes for this vintage come 84% from Paso Robles. —J.G.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $15

88 Ken Brown 2012 Pinot Noir (Santa Barbara County). Black currants, cranberry, pomegranate and stewed plum fruits meet with pencil shavings and sagebrush on the nose. Flavors are relatively light and straightforward, with dark red raspberry ripeness and tart plum skin tannins. —M.K.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $35

88 Roblar 2013 Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Coffee spice and cran-raspberry juice aromas greet the nose. This is rich on the palate at first, but a decent bitterness and acidity grace the edges, proving both full and bright, though a tad hot. —M.K.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $35

88 Siduri 2012 Hirsch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Fort Ross-Seaview). Evoking the richness and slightly tart deliciousness of a strawberry-rhubarb compote, this is a bright, vibrant and chewy Pinot, its dry tannins peaking on the finish. From a great vineyard site long sourced by the producer, it's on the lighter side in terms of body and weight, and may need further time to come into its own, through 2017. ***Cellar Selection.*** —V.B.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $54

88 Siduri 2012 Sonatera Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Super earthy, in the classic damp forest-floor way, this also offers hints of menthol, eucalyptus and tomato leaf. The wine begins light bodied, but builds up power and weight as it goes. Layered with black cherry and plum, it's dark and savory. —V.B.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $49

88 Silver Trident 2012 Benevolent Dictator Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). A fragrant bouquet of roses greets the nose on this 100% Pinot Noir aged in all French oak, 40% of it new. Vibrant red cranberry and cherry and marked acidity commingle nicely to offer a tart, spicy freshness to the smooth tannins and mild finish. —V.B.
abv: 13.8% **Price:** $55

87 Austerity 2013 Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands). For full review see page 101.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $17

87 Fulcrum 2012 Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). A very subtle aroma leads to a rich feel on the palate, where ripe plum and soft berry flavors emerge. This wine is totally smooth, warm and plush, full bodied but with soft tannins that make it easy to sip. —J.G.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $54

87 Marimar Estate 2012 La Masía Don Miguel Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Damp earth and forest floor mark this wine, a blend of various clones, the majority of which are Pommard. Red raspberry and cherry compete for attention aromatically and in taste, followed by a spiciness of Christmas clove. —V.B.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $44

87 Zepaltas 2012 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Blended from several stellar vineyard sites, including La Cruz and Devoto, this wine presents a brightness of acidity and crisp, red fruit. These are offset by a heartier uptake of oak and tannin that feels out of place compared to many of the producer's single-vineyard offerings. On the finish, expect tart cranberry and pomegranate to peak. —V.B.
abv: 13.3% **Price:** $32

MERLOT

91 Brave & Maiden 2011 Merlot (Santa Ynez Valley). This new project by a former White House videographer recently enlisted Paul Hobbs as a consultant. The promise is already apparent in this wine, with aromas of cedar, cherry extract and pleasant green-pepper elements. Spicy black pepper leads the palate, which finds ripeness in black cherry and balance with leather and coffee. —M.K.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $50

91 Cerro Prieto 2009 Reserve Merlot (Paso Robles). For full review see page 98.
abv: 15.8% **Price:** $42

90 Zilaro Cellars 2012 Merlot (Temecula Valley). A strong showing for the SoCal region, this presents very strong red fruit aromas of berry pie, lifted with pastry warmth and clove spices. The strongly structured tannins are prevalent but fine-grained, with cherry and blueberry flavors popping out, along with crushed Italian herbs that provide sensory balance. —M.K.
abv: 15.6% **Price:** $36

88 Coquelicot 2011 Reserve Merlot (Santa Ynez Valley). The intriguing nose presents juicy grape candy, but in a serious way, with black licorice and maduro cigar notes. It's lighter than expected once sipped, but strong flavors of smoked meats and boysenberry fruit touch all parts of the palate. —M.K.
abv: 14% **Price:** $65

87 Gainey 2012 Merlot (Santa Ynez Valley). Aromas of ripe red cherries, licorice and vanilla extract emerge from this wine by the longtime estate across from the township of Santa Ynez. Blackberry and blueberry fruits power the palate, but there's a black dirt earthiness and some meatiness too. Tannins are still quite strong. —M.K.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $24

87 Pietra Santa 2010 Estate Merlot (Cienega Valley). There's a slightly sour, forest-floor funkiness to the nose of this wine from an historic appellation near Hollister. Not boasting much ripe fruit on the palate, the flavors lean toward leather and earth, with fine tannins, nice acidity and hints of licorice. —M.K.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** $18

87 Sevtap 2012 Nola Merlot (Santa Ynez Valley). Very rich aromas of cherry, blueberry syrup and hot blackberry jam-filled pastry greet the nose. So the sour cherry and tart cranberry flavors are surprising on this medium-bodied wine, which also picks up interesting peppery notes into a lingering finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $34

SYRAH

94 Shafer 2011 Relentless (Napa Valley). There's no denying the power in this wine, which contains Syrah and Petite Sirah sourced from one ridgetop Stags Leap District site. But in this case, power is a beautiful thing, sinewy and contained. Complex in plum, gamy meat and a lingering suggestion of coconut, it has size offset by the acidity, and a beguiling finish of cracked black pepper. Things will get more interesting in the cellar, through 2021–2026. ***Cellar Selection.*** —V.B.
abv: 15.8% **Price:** $80

93 Carlisle 2012 Sierra Mar Vineyard Syrah (Santa Lucia Highlands). The Sonoma Zinfandel house pursues a rich, opulent Rhône style in this bottling, with aromas of dark red fruit, purple florals, game and wet asphalt. It hits the palate with a Sichuan pepper-like buzz that enlivens the mouth far into the finish, with well-seasoned flavors of dried cherries, fennel and crushed Italian herbs. —M.K.
abv: 15.8% **Price:** $43

92 Mesa Del Sol 2009 Syrah (Arroyo Seco). For full review see page 96.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $29

91 Bianchi 2011 Heritage Selection Syrah (Paso Robles). For full review see page 97.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $26

91 Brave & Maiden 2011 Syrah (Santa Ynez Valley). Olallieberry fruit, charred meats and a bit of oak smoke introduce the nose of this wine from a newly renamed vineyard in the middle of Santa Ynez Valley, where Paul Hobbs recently signed on as consultant. Flavors are led by tar and herbs, with ripe purple fruit and black pepper arising on the midpalate and finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $65

91 Lucia 2012 Susan's Hill Vineyard Syrah (Santa Lucia Highlands). Extremely inky in the glass, this wine from a special corner of the Pisoni family's vineyard shows deep purple fruit aromas of bramble and boysenberry, lifted with nose-tickling white pepper spice. Ripe olallieberry flavors are cut with vibrant acidity and graphite-like minerality that's airy on the palate. Strong tannic structure means the wine will improve by 2018, and drink nicely to 2028. ***Cellar Selection***. —M.K.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $50

91 Roar 2012 Garys' Vineyard Syrah (Santa Lucia Highlands). Warm aromas of mocha powder and spicy white pepper mesh with the boysenberry jam foundation on this wine by the region's pioneering Franscioni family. The intriguing palate shows a lot of fennel, tarragon and black pepper, with ripe but tart boysenberry fruit and prominent lavender elements. This great wine shows the grape's herbal potential. —M.K.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $40

91 Roar 2012 Rosella's Vineyard Syrah (Santa Lucia Highlands). Inviting aromas of gingerbread spice, cooked black cherries and dried violets emerge from this wine by the Franscioni family. It's subtle once sipped, but eventually flavors of licorice, boysenberry and cracked black pepper emerge through the supple mouthfeel. Purple flowers blossom on the finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $40

89 Lucia 2012 Garys' Vineyard Syrah (Santa Lucia Highlands). All of the grape's myriad elements swirl together on the nose of this wine by the Pisoni family, with lots of wild berry fruit edged by pepper, roasting game and chopped, singed herbs. The palate is dominated by a tight and firm structure, so expect more fun to be had in years to come, but the blackberry fruit and herb-crusted beef roast flavors do show through the tannic veil. —M.K.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $50

88 McClean X 2010 One Last Syrah Syrah (California). Cherry candy, vanilla liqueur and spearmint rise to the nose of this well priced wine by Steve McClean. Dark chocolate-covered cherries and a prominent black pepper character show on the palate. —M.K.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $20

88 Minassian-Young 2012 Estate Syrah (Paso Robles). This dry-farmed whopper of a wine, which is boosted with 10% Counoise and 10% Mourvèdre, offers rich aromas of blueberry, pine sap and mushrooms. It proves tremendously lush on the palate, with jammy, ripe fruit, picking up tannins and a tiny bit of acidity to approach balance in the midpalate. It's for those who prefer power to finesse. —M.K.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $26

88 San Simeon 2010 Estate Reserve Syrah (Paso Robles). Oak aromas takes center stage with this wine by the Riboli family, with black cherry extract and a nearly Bourbon-barrel character on the nose. The rich, deep red fruit carries to the palate, which gains complexity from licorice and a tiny bit of tar. —M.K.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $25

88 Tolosa 2011 Estate Syrah (Edna Valley). The solar-powered winery produces a wine with aromas of raw meat, blueberry, graphite and a bit of barrel smoke. The palate shows bountiful purple fruit ripeness, but it's cut with wet slate minerality and an herbaceous quality that gives complexity and depth. —M.K.
abv: 13.4% **Price:** $32

87 Cameron Hughes 2011 Lot 423 Syrah (Napa Valley). Tech sheets hint at Stagecoach Vineyard being involved somehow in this Syrah, a chewy expression of coconut, smoke and game around a dense, concentrated body and well-integrated tannins. The finish is all about mocha. —V.B.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $19

RED BLENDS

94 Carlisle 2012 Two Acres (Russian River Valley). This is a mix of Mourvédre, Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Syrah, Carignane and Peloursin from a two-acre site planted long ago. Smoky and yet pretty in rose, orange and mushroomy earth, it maintains a steady streak of raspberry, blackberry, leather and licorice. It will only get better over time, through 2022. ***Editors' Choice***. —V.B.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $45

92 Sextant 2012 Portolan (Paso Robles). The nose on this blend of 58% Syrah, 29% Grenache, 11% Petite Sirah and 2% Mourvèdre proves both pretty and tough, with scents of butter-laden blackberry pastries and lilacs getting serious with tar. It's luxuriously rich once sipped, with ripe blackberry, elderberry, smoked game, roasted fennel and espresso flavors swirling amid the tannic-laden palate. —M.K.
abv: 15.1% **Price:** $80

91 Barton 2011 Watchtower (Paso Robles). This blend of 40% Grenache, 30% Tannat and 30% Mourvèdre begins with a remarkably well-integrated nose disclosing caramelized strawberries and menthol. The savory palate features leather, truffles and toasted sage, with smooth tannins and a touch of acidity that prove to be both easy-drinking and serious. —M.K.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $38

91 Lone Madrone 2010 Old Hat (Paso Robles). Grapes come from heritage selection off the Osgood farm, and the wine shows licorice-berry-chocolate syrup aromas, as well as espresso with condensed milk and pipe smoke. The tannins coat the mouth and tickle the tongue in a pleasant way, offering rich plum fruit, graphite minerality and lifting mint, all balanced with strong acidity. —M.K.
abv: 15.5% **Price:** $48

91 Standing Sun 2011 G-S-M (Santa Barbara County). Despite his head-turning concert series at his Buellton winery, John Wright isn't losing sight of good winemaking. This Camp 4 Vineyard blend of 40% Grenache, 35% Syrah and 25% Mourvèdre offers an elegant nose of purple fruit, aromatic herbs and restrained woodiness. Elderberries and dried blueberries emerge once sipped, with cedar down the middle and pepper and Italian herbs on the edges. —M.K.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $28

91 Ventana 2011 Le Mistral (Monterey County). Coming in an oddly shaped, presumably old-style bottle, this blend of 51% Syrah, 39% Grenache, 7% Alicante Bouschet and 3% Petite Sirah packs a deep, rich nose full of blueberry syrup, vanilla and nutmeg, almost approaching brandy. Framed by a solid tannic structure, flavors hover on cola and cherries before hitting the spearmint-powered finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $45

91 Zenaida Cellars 2012 Zephyr (Paso Robles). Eric Ogorsolka makes great wines from his Templeton Gap vineyard, and this blend of 55% Syrah, 40% Zinfandel and 5% Viognier fits right in, with a complex nose of violets, roasted game and hickory smoke. Crisp black currant flavors excite the palate, which shows noticeable oak as well as leather, pepper and a nice line of slate minerality down the middle. —M.K.
abv: 15.1% **Price:** $37

91 Zenaida Cellars 2011 Fire Sign (Paso Robles). Eric Ogorsolka's two-plus decades of blending experience show strongly in this bottling of 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Syrah and 25% Zinfandel. Cassis-like fruit on the nose is cut wide open with chopped green herbs and lifting mint. Anise-speckled blackberry juice dominates the palate. It proves to be a very flavorful wine that stays light on the tongue. —M.K.
abv: 15.5% **Price:** $32

90 Andis 2011 Goedeck-Liu Vineyard Meritage (Sierra Foothills). This strikes a good balance between spicy oak, fruitiness and firm texture. It smells lightly spicy from oak barrels, and also fresh like red cherry and sweet plums. Rich and layered in feel, it finishes dry and full bodied. Not overblown, it has just the right mix of elements for the dinner table. —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $33

90 Francis Ford Coppola 2012 Director's Cut Cinema (Sonoma County). Cola spice and eager acidity mark this blend of 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Zinfandel, 4% Petite Sirah and 2% Syrah, which spent time in both French and American oak. Soft and medium in weight, it's enjoyable now and an easy crowd pleaser, with a long, spicy finish. —V.B.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $39

90 Las Positas 2010 Meritage (Livermore Valley). This is full bodied and ripe in flavor, while keeping a firmly tannic but supple texture. The concentrated black cherry and black currant notes are delicious, and hints of black pepper and smoke add complexity. It is very tasty to drink now and through 2017. —J.G.
abv: 13.7% **Price:** $40

90 Naggiar 2011 La Bohéme (Sierra Foothills). Good balance, firm tannins and plenty of luxurious black cherry and dark chocolate flavors make this a complete and satisfying wine. It's medium to full bodied and has a rich but firm texture. The ample fruit flavors linger on the finish. —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $42

90 Taken Wine Co. 2012 Taken Red (Napa Valley). Robust, dense and meaty, this 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot dances around well-concocted swirls of black tea, herb and cedar. Soft and smooth on the palate, the oak is subtle, coaxing out flavors of tobacco and black currant, finishing with purpose. —V.B.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $30

89 Giornata 2012 Gemellaia (Paso Robles). This is an ambitious, Super Tuscan-esque blend of 60% Sangiovese, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon 10% and Petit Verdot. It shows woody cedar, violet flowers and dense purple fruit on the nose. Tongue-tingling acidity enlivens the palate, which offers good tension between blackberry juice and tarry grip. —M.K.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $45

89 Preston 2012 L. Preston (Dry Creek Valley). The longtime Dry Creek producer offers a complex intermingling of 60% Syrah, 14% Grenache, 14% Mourvédre, 6% Carignane and 6% Cinsault here, the overall blend high-toned in raspberry and licorice. Not overly oaked, the floral nose maintains itself from start to finish, along with a velvety mouthfeel and plenty of structure. It's made from organic grapes. —V.B.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $36

89 Rotta 2013 Red (Paso Robles). The Rotta family's winemaking history goes back a century, and this blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petite Sirah shows experience, with roasted plum, lava rocks, turned earth, dill and mint on the nose. It's a little too structured right now, with tannins dominating the palate, but full of deep purple-fruit flavors, mainly blueberry. —M.K.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $20

88 Anaba 2012 Turbine Red (Sonoma Valley). A blend of 43% Grenache, 41% Mourvédre and 16% Syrah from two vineyard sites, one warmer than the other, this plummy red is bright on the palate. Smoky and not overly oaked, it contributes gamy twinges of black currant and cardamom to the long finish. —V.B.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $28

88 Joullian NV Retro Rouge (Carmel Valley). This kitchen-sink blend of Merlot, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Cabernet Franc proves more herbaceous than ripe on the nose, with dried and chopped oregano and thyme, wet slate and cigar box notes. It's all earth and stone on the palate, with just a touch of stark plum fruit emerging. —M.K.
abv: 13% **Price:** $15

88 Pali 2012 The Jetty (Paso Robles). A blend of fruit from Sea Shell and Shoemaker vineyards on Paso's Eastside, this blends black cherry aromas with pungent cigar box and toasted sage. It's lively on the palate, with acidic flare and a nice tannic structure. The red fruit and dark spice flavors culminate in an uplifting, anise-flecked finish. —M.K.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $21

88 Ringer 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah (Santa Barbara County). This blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Syrah offers varietally blended aromas of black currant, charred hardwood and black pepper. It's very jammy and hedonistic on the palate, with hot blueberry pie and toasted vanilla-bean elements, yet the tannins and acidity hold the powerful flavors in check. ***Best Buy***. —M.K.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $10

88 Sextant 2012 Night Watch (Paso Robles). This blend of 53% Zinfandel, 26% Petite Sirah and 21% Syrah shows grape candy and roasted beef crust on the nose. The flavors are dark with creosote, licorice and dark chocolate, proving to be a heavy, thick wine that's balanced by plum-skin tannins. —M.K.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $50

88 The Farm Winery 2011 Touchy Feely (Paso Robles). Black currants, sassafras, tobacco, leather and smoked meats converge on the nose. Flavors trend darkly toward creosote, but there's a nice bright acidity amid the emergent boysenberry fruit. It's surprisingly pungent and heavy for a Grenache-based wine. —M.K.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $60

WASHINGTON

SYRAH

93 B. Leighton 2012 Olsen Brothers Vineyard Syrah (Yakima Valley). Aromas suggest green olive, mineral, moist earth and herbs. The palate explodes with iron, smoked meat, herb and savory flavors blanketed by a mesmerizingly silky texture. The finish shows persistence, purity and detail. Give it time to strut its stuff. Best after 2016. ***Editors' Choice***. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $45

93 Owen Roe 2012 Chapel Block Red Willow Vineyard Syrah (Yakima Valley). Hailing from the vineyard with the state's first Syrah plantings, this aromatically expressive wine offers dry chocolate, dates and mineral. It's full bodied, sweet and rich with dense layers of fruit flavors juxtaposed by a velvety mouthfeel. ***Editors' Choice***. —S.S.
abv: 15.1% **Price:** $55

93 Waters 2012 Old Stones Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). This wine from the Rocks District is vibrant, with aromas of smoked meat, flowers, citrus twist and blue fruit. It's packed with soft, flavorful huckleberry and mineral notes that lead to a tart, long fruit-filled finish. ***Editors' Choice***. —S.S.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $50

92 Basalt 2012 Syrah (Columbia Valley). Aged 17 months in 50% new French oak, this wine offers coffee, blue and black fruit and bittersweet chocolate. It's lush and hedonistic in style, drinking like a candy bar, showing good concentration to the fruit flavors with a lingering finish. —S.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $36

92 Mark Ryan 2012 Lost Soul Syrah Red Willow Vineyard Syrah (Yakima Valley). Coming from one of Washington's top Syrah vineyards, this wine offers an intriguing assortment of dark coffee, peppery spices, milk chocolate and dried flowers. It's rich and flavorful with notes of bittersweet chocolate and smoked meat leading to a warm finish. —S.S.
abv: 15.1% **Price:** $48

92 Two Vintners 2012 Some Days Are Stones Stoney Vine Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). Whereas many Syrahs from this vintage from the Rocks District show more fruit than usual, this wine is clearly rooted in the stones. It's aromatically expressive with black olive, crushed flowers, mineral, black pepper and an earthy funk. Flavors are silky soft in feel, with a well-balanced mixture

of fruit and savory notes that leads to a lingering finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $40

92 Va Piano 2012 Syrah (Columbia Valley). For full review see page 97.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $40

92 Va Piano 2012 Portteus Syrah (Rattlesnake Hills). This is an aromatically brooding wine with notes of dark blue fruit, smoke, mineral and dried flowers. It's restrained in style with persistent blue fruit flavors. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $65

91 Burnt Bridge 2012 Les Collines Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). This appealing wine offers aromas of blueberry, cocoa, violets and herbs. The blue and black fruit flavors show good concentration and intensity with a lingering finish. —S.S.
abv: 16.3% **Price:** $34

91 Damsel 2012 Syrah (Columbia Valley). Blended with 10% Mourvèdre and 5% Grenache, with the fruit coming from StoneTree and Stillwater Creek vineyards, this inaugural release offers brambly fruit, smoke, chocolate and peppery spices. It's full of rich, layered but still supple blue and black fruit flavors that linger on the finish, showing a deft mixture of power and restraint supported by a light grip of tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** $32

91 Dumas Station 2012 The Excursion Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). A new release from this winery, this aromatically intriguing wine conveys blueberry, dried herbs, flowers and cigar box. The palate shows good concentration and intensity to the sweet, succulent blue fruit flavors that linger on the finish with barrel notes. The wood gets a little out front but hopefully it will integrate more with time. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $48

91 Kerloo 2012 Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). A blend of Va Piano (53%) and Blue Mountain vineyards with 2% Les Collines Viognier added to the mix, this wine offers aromas of green olive, lavender, pepper and smoked meat. It's restrained in style with meaty flavors and tart, mouthwatering acids that bring it home. —S.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $40

91 Kerloo 2012 Les Collines Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). Aromatically brooding, this suggests dry chocolate, violets, brown stems, herbs, black pepper and smoked meat. It's restrained in style with pure, tart blue fruit flavors and a light squeeze of tannins that need additional time in bottle to settle in fully. Enjoy it at the dinner table to see it at its best. —S.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $40

91 Owen Roe 2013 Ex Umbris Syrah (Columbia Valley). This 100% varietal wine offers generous notes of fig, chocolate and smoke. It's restrained yet rich, supple and layered with boysenberry and chocolate flavors that linger. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $28

91 Syncline 2012 McKinley Springs Syrah (Horse Heaven Hills). Coming from 12-year-old plantings that are just starting to hit their stride, this wine shows brooding notes of blueberry, rhubarb, herbs and espresso. The flavors show intensity and restraint with slightly gritty tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $30

91 Two Vintners 2012 Syrah (Columbia Valley). Coming from five different Syrah vineyards across the Columbia Valley, this wine offers high quality and value. It conveys black olives, iron, an earthy funk, chocolate and floral accents. The coffee and earth flavors are rich while still showing exquisite restraint. ***Editors' Choice***. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $21

90 Dusted Valley 2012 Rachis Syrah (Columbia Valley). This 100% varietal comes from StoneTree and Red Heaven vineyards. Fruit-forward, it suggests blueberry pie with barrel notes of pencil lead and vanilla. It's full bodied and supple in feel with abundant blue-fruit flavors and smoked-meat accents on the warm, lingering finish. —S.S.
abv: 15.4% **Price:** $53

90 Reininger 2012 Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). A mixture of Pepper Bridge and Seven Hills vineyards, this offers aromas of orange peel, flowers and assorted blue fruit. It shows good depth and concentration of flavors with a gritty feel to the tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $47

90 Two Mountain 2012 Copeland Vineyard Syrah (Yakima Valley). You'd swear this 100% varietal wine had some Viognier in it, but the orange-peel aromas and flavors are just a hallmark of Yakima Valley fruit. It also features abundant cranberry, mulberry, rose hip and savory notes. The supple feel with light meat accents is where this wine really shines, showing purity, texture and a lot of elegance. Those looking for big fruit, look elsewhere. —S.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $25

89 Cascade Ridge 2013 Syrah (Columbia Valley). This appealing wine suggests blueberry pie, herbs and confection. It shows good intensity with a pleasing richness to the abundant olive accents and fruit flavors that linger. The balance is spot on. —S.S.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $18

89 Efesté 2011 Jolie Bouche Syrah Boushey Vineyard Syrah (Yakima Valley). This offering from one of the state's most esteemed Syrah vineyards conveys coffee, mineral, bacon fat, dark chocolate and funk—with the aromas not seeming entirely knitted together. Flavors show good richness and intensity leading to an elegant finish. —S.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $39

89 For a Song 2012 Syrah (Columbia Valley). This wine offers notes of earthy funk, bacon fat, dark roasted coffee and bittersweet chocolate. The lipsmacking fruit and barrel flavors show a lot of intensity and richness for this price point, with a tart uptick on the finish. ***Best Buy***. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $14

89 Waters 2012 Loess Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). Aromatically reserved, this wine suggests sage and orange peel (4% Viognier), with all of the aromas high-toned. It's tart and flavorful with red and blue fruit notes backed by light squeeze of tannins that needs some time to lessen their grip. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

88 Burnt Bridge 2012 Coyote Canyon Vineyard Syrah (Horse Heaven Hills). This appealing wine offers aromas of blueberry and huckleberry, and drinks like a vinous piece of blueberry pie. It's a bit one-note but it hits that note hard and well. —S.S.
abv: 15.8% **Price:** $34

88 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2012 Syrah (Columbia Valley). Aromas of smoked meat, mesquite, green olive and tire rubber meld with barrel spice accents. It's soft and supple in feel with abundant savory flavors—an interesting wine that has some edge. —S.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $15

88 Columbia Crest 2012 Grand Estates Syrah (Columbia Valley). Aromatically pleasing, this suggests fresh blueberry pie, with a whiff of smoked meat. It's straightforward with huckleberry and mocha flavors, trailing slightly toward the finish. ***Best Buy***. —S.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $12

88 Cottonwood Winery of Oregon 2008 Raya Jade Syrah (Yakima Valley). A full six years old, this aromatic wine from Crawford Vineyard unfolds with baking spices, raspberries and cranberries along with a whiff of volatility. It's full bodied, sweet, rich and extracted with abundant red fruit flavors, sweet oak accents and a warm finish. The alcohol rides a bit high but overall the wine holds it well. —S.S.
abv: 15.5% **Price:** $19

88 Dusted Valley 2012 Stained Tooth Syrah (Columbia Valley). The fruit for this wine comes from the Red Heaven and StoneTree vineyards, with 10% Mourvèdre and 10% Petit Sirah. It seems a bit locked up at present, with notes of plum, blueberry and flowers. It's full bodied and rich, with the alcohol dominating the fruit flavors and causing some distraction. —S.S.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** $32

88 Northwest Cellars 2010 Coyote Canyon Vineyard Syrah (Horse Heaven Hills). This 100% varietal wine offers lightly volatile notes of vanilla, coconut, pepper and dried cherries. The fruit flavors show good concentration along with a beguiling feel and a finish that lingers. Although the wood takes center stage, it plays its part well. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $32

88 Two Vintners 2012 Some Days Are Diamonds Syrah (Horse Heaven Hills). This 100% Syrah conveys espresso, raw meat, flowers, chocolate and peppery spices. It's reserved in style with tart acids. —S.S.
abv: 13.7% **Price:** $40

GRENACHE

93 B. Leighton 2012 Olsen Brothers Vineyard Grenache (Yakima Valley). This inaugural release is 100% varietal that's aged in neutral French puncheons. The panoply of notes includes raspberry seed, dark plum, green olive and nori. The mouthfeel is the true star with a rich, pillowy-soft, palate-coating texture showing exceptional purity and an extended finish. ***Editors' Choice***. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $45

93 Latta 2011 Upland Vineyard Grenache (Snipes Mountain). Light in color, this 100% varietal wine was macerated with 50% stems and 50% whole berries before being aged in 500L neutral French-oak puncheons. It's perfumed with dark raspberries, cherry Jolly Ranchers, herbs, lavender, potpourri and mineral. The outrageously supple yet rich, supremely elegant mouthfeel dazzles. —S.S.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** $45

91 Idilico 2012 Garnacha (Yakima Valley). A blend of Elerding and Upland vineyards, this intriguing wine offers reserved notes of herbs, ash, cherry, mineral and flowers. It's soft and sumptuous in feel, rich with sweet fruit flavors and a finish that glides. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $22

90 Kerloo 2012 Upland Vineyard Grenache (Snipes Mountain). Fermented with 35% stems and aged in neutral French oak, this 100% varietal wine brings both hedonistic and intellectual enjoyment. Lighter in color, it offers intriguing notes of flowers, mineral, dried herbs and red and blue fruit. The elegantly styled, creamy flavors suggest smoke and mineral, with an appealing sultry feel. —S.S.
abv: 13.8% **Price:** $40

87 Sol Stone 2012 Weinbau Grenache (Wahluke Slope). The aromas on this wine are quite light, conveying wood, herbs and red fruit. This contrasts with the sweet, rich fruit flavors with a gentle grip of tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $32

87 Trinity Vineyards 2012 Grenache (Washington). The inaugural vintage of this wine offers notes of caramel, herbs and raspberry. The flavors are full, chocolaty and sweet, backed by dry tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $28

RED BLENDS

93 Avennia 2012 Sestina (Columbia Valley). This standout wine is 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot and 9% Cabernet Franc mostly from old blocks at Dionysus, Red Willow and Bacchus vineyards. It's youthful with aromas of toasty barrel spices, dark roasted coffee and high-toned savory herbs. Flavors are light and restrained while still showing a lot of richness, with the dark fruit notes backed by mouthwatering acids. Just a baby now, this is a 20-year wine that should start to strut its stuff after 2024. Give it a 24-hour decant if opening it in the near term. ***Cellar Selection***. —S.S.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $60

93 Flying Trout 2011 The Brook Blend (Columbia Valley). This blend of 60% Malbec and 40% Cabernet Sauvignon delivers notes of savory herbs, vanilla, cocoa and dark plum surrounded by a salty brine. The cranberry and blackberry flavors exhibit depth, elegance and purity, with a mesmerizing mouthfeel that leads to a hyper-extended, fruit-filled finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $35

93 Sparkman 2012 Stella Mae Red (Columbia Valley). This wine is 67% Cabernet Sauvignon with the rest equal parts Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. It's aromatic and fruit-forward, offering red plum, herbs, milk chocolate and floral accents. The fruit flavors are rich and focused, showing great depth and intensity with a palate-coating feel. ***Editors' Choice***. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $48

92 Avennia 2012 Gravura (Columbia Valley). This blend of 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot and 11% Cabernet Sauvignon comes from an assortment of top sites including Bacchus, Klipsun, Red Willow, Boushey, Champoux and Angela's. Appealing aromas suggest coffee, dark fruit, graphite and herbs. It's light in feel but possesses richness of flavor along with a real sense of vibrancy that extends through the finish. Some time in the cellar will only add to its charms. Best after 2020. ***Cellar Selection***. —S.S.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $35

92 Baer 2011 Callisto (Columbia Valley). For this blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Syrah and 10% Petit Verdot, all the fruit comes from Stillwater Creek Vineyard. The wine offers notes of mocha, coffee, woodspice, herbs and dark cherry. It's palate-coating and full in feel, with verve to the blackberry and cranberry flavors that are backed by a firm grip of tannins that need some time in the bottle to come into their own. —S.S.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $39

92 Owen Roe 2012 Red (Yakima Valley). This blend of Merlot (36%), Cabernet Franc (35%), Cabernet Sauvignon (27%) and Malbec is somewhat light in color with notes of dried herbs, black currant, flowers and barrel spices. The blackberry and cherry flavors are concentrated, sweet, rich and focused without carrying excess alcoholic weight. Firm tannins provide the frame. ***Editors' Choice***. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $28

92 Sparkman 2012 Ruby Leigh (Columbia Valley). This blend of Merlot (56%), Cabernet Sauvignon (20%), Cabernet Franc (20%) and Malbec comes principally from Red Mountain vineyards (Klipsun, Kiona and Obelisco) along with a dash of Dionysus. Somewhat light in color, it's aromatic with vanilla, red and black fruit and bittersweet chocolate. The fruit flavors are creamy and hedonistic in style but not over-the-top and are backed by velvety soft tannins. ***Editors' Choice***. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $48

92 Syncline 2013 Subduction Red (Columbia Valley). This blend of Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignan, Counoise, Grenache and Cinsault immediately appeals with its aromas of plum, candied raspberry and garrigue, with no oak influence anywhere in sight. It's fruit laden, focused and supple, with a feel that dazzles the senses and pure fruit flavors that just won't quit. ***Editors' Choice***. —S.S.
abv: 13.8% **Price:** $20

91 Avennia 2012 Valery (Columbia Valley). A new offering from this winery, this wine is 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. It's light in color with aromas of red and black raspberry, flowers and dried herbs, showing both purity and detail. Flavors are lighter in style and velvety in feel, with an impressively long finish. It's all about elegance and texture. —S.S.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $45

91 Baer 2011 Arctos (Columbia Valley). This wine is 70% Cabernet Sauvignon with the rest equal parts Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot. It offers notes of mocha, herbs, blackberries, black cherries, vanilla and woodspice. The style is restrained but it's still fully flavored with sumptuous black fruits and a lick of tannins that need some time to settle. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $43

91 Baer 2011 Ursa (Columbia Valley). This wine is equal parts Cabernet Franc and Merlot with the balance Malbec (8%) and Cabernet Sauvignon (6%). Aromas suggest pencil lead, vanilla, herbs, barrel spices and an assortment of red and black fruit. The coffee and cherry flavors are elegant in style, soft and supple in feel, with a grip of tan-

nins and a tart finish. The wood often leads but there's plenty of stuffing there too. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $39

91 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2011 Artist Series Meritage (Columbia Valley). This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (72%), Merlot (25%), Cabernet Franc (2%) and Malbec offers generous notes of chocolate, vanilla, pencil lead and dark fruit. It shows a nice interplay of elegant fruit and barrel flavors with vanilla taking the lead on the finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $55

91 Corvus 2011 Cuvée (Columbia Valley). This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (53%), Merlot (38%) and Cabernet Franc brings a whole lot of quality and value. With notes of blackberries, chocolate and dried cranberries, it shows good delineation and nuance. It's restrained yet flavorful, with pure black cherry flavors, mouthwatering acids and a firm squeeze of tannins that will benefit from some additional time in the bottle. —S.S.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** $21

91 Dusted Valley 2012 Wallywood (Columbia Valley). This blend of Syrah (52%), Petit Sirah (24%), Mourvèdre (16%) and Grenache from StoneTree and Red Heaven vineyards is appealing with its chocolate, mulberry and peppery spices. It's high-octane and richly flavored with a lingering blue-fruit and meat-filled finish backed by lightly chalky tannins. —S.S.
abv: 15.2% **Price:** $42

91 Mark Ryan 2012 Numbskull G-S-M(Walla Walla Valley). A blend of Syrah (58%), Grenache (26%) and Mourvèdre, this initially aromatically brooding wine offers mineral, barrel spice, bittersweet chocolate and high-toned red and black fruit. It's velvety and voluptuous in feel with a lingering finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $35

91 Ott & Murphy 2010 L'Entente (Columbia Valley). This blend of Syrah, Petite Sirah, Mourvèdre and Viognier offers intriguing aromas of blackberry and plum with woodspice accents. It's pleasingly fresh and pure with rich, focused fruit flavors that linger. —S.S.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $36

91 Pondera 2010 Cuvée (Columbia Valley). Lighter in color, this Cabernet Sauvignon-dominant blend shows alluring notes of cherry, assorted herbs and bittersweet chocolate. It's elegant in style with a velvety feel to the fruit flavors. —S.S.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $19

91 Syncline 2012 Cuvée Elena (Columbia Valley). Equal parts Mourvèdre and Grenache finished with 10% Syrah, this ripe wine offers aromas of dried herbs, coffee and candied red fruit. It's rich and layered with abundant cherry flavors that lead to a light squeeze of tannins that hold on through the fruit-filled finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** $40

91 Two Vintners 2012 Lola (Walla Walla Valley). A blend of 60% Syrah and 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, predominantly from Yellow Jacket and Pepper Bridge vineyards, this wine is directly appealing with notes of bittersweet chocolate, moist earth, orange peel, dried cranberry and barrel spices. It's flavorful and supple in feel with well-framed acidity. —S.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $29

90 Burnt Bridge 2012 Pont Brûlé (Columbia Valley). This blend of Grenache (60%), Syrah and Mourvèdre is fruit-focused, conveying plum and dark raspberries along with herbs and violets. It brings a pleasing sense of purity and texture to the generous fruit flavors that linger on the finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $32

90 Owen Roe 2013 Abbot's Table (Columbia Valley). A blend of Zinfandel (41%), Sangiovese (34%), Lemberger (9%), Malbec (11%) and Merlot, this appealing wine suggests plum, currant and red fruit. It's supple in feel with cranberry and raspberry flavors backed by tart acidity. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $24

90 Patterson 2011 BDX (Columbia Valley). This blend of 28% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 16% Cabernet Franc, 16% Malbec and 13% Petit Verdot offers notes of herbs, roasted coffee bean, cherry and high-toned flowers. Flavors are rich yet restrained with a good sense of tannic structure that should benefit from some additional time in the cellar. —S.S.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $34

90 Pondera 2010 Consensio (Columbia Valley). This blend uses all five Bordeaux varieties, with Cabernet Sauvignon taking the lead. It offers notes of cocoa, cherry, herbs and licorice. The feel is soft with elegant tannins and abundant cherry flavors, showing a good sense of balance throughout. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $36

90 Thurston Wolfe 2010 The Geologist (Columbia Valley). This wine is a blend of Upland Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (50%), Double Canyon Petit Verdot (38%) and McKinley Springs Malbec. It's aromatically reserved, revealing fresh and dried herbs, green pepper, vanilla, cocoa and dark cherry. The dark fruit flavors show a very pretty combination of richness and restraint. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $50

90 Waters 2011 Interlude (Columbia Valley). This blend of Merlot (61%), Cabernet Sauvignon (14%), Malbec (14%) and Petit Verdot offers aromas of dried herbs, black olive, coffee and citrus speckled with barrel spices. It's lighter in style, with mouthwatering acids and a gentle squeeze of tannins on the herb-filled finish. It will shine best with food. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $28

89 Flying Trout 2011 Deep River Red (Columbia Valley). This blend of Malbec (54%) and Cabernet Franc brings appeal with notes of tobacco, mocha, blackberry, herbs and peppery spices. It's elegant in style with a supple, palate-coating feel that provides much of the enjoyment along with abundant blue fruit flavors that linger. —S.S.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $29

89 Mark Ryan 2012 Numbskull BDX (Walla Walla Valley). This appealing blend of Merlot (69%), Cabernet Sauvignon (28%) and Petit Verdot conveys dark roasted coffee along with red and black fruit with barrel accents. Abundant vanilla and coffee flavors partner with grippy tannins that need more time in the bottle to settle in. —S.S.
abv: 15.1% **Price:** $38

89 Owen Roe 2013 Sinister Hand (Columbia Valley). This lightly colored wine—a blend of 64% Grenache, 16% Syrah, 12% Mourvèdre and Cinsault—offers generous notes of candied raspberries, cranberries, coffee, plum and vanilla. It's soft and supple in feel with dried cranberry and coffee flavors that linger. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** $24

89 Pomum Cellars 2011 Shya (Yakima Valley). This is an intriguing blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot where no variety makes up more than 28% of the mix. It offers notes of damp earth, gravel, black licorice, smoke, cedar and herbs. The raspberry and cherry flavors are lighter in style but concentrated, keeping the interest high. —S.S.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $40

89 Thurston Wolfe 2012 The Spaniard Premium (Columbia Valley). This blend of Grenache (63%), Tempranillo (25%) and Syrah offers barrel notes of fresh brewed coffee, woodspice and vanilla bean along with red and blue fruit. It's silky-soft with a creamy feel backed by grainy tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $20

88 Brian Carter Cellars 2011 Corrida (Yakima Valley). This blend of Tempranillo (61%), Merlot (13%), Graciano (11%), Garnacha (8%) and Cabernet Sauvignon recalls burnt coffee, red fruit, tobacco, vanilla and exotic spices. It's supple in feel with lightly chalky tannins. —S.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $34

88 Brian Carter Cellars 2010 Tuttorosso (Yakima Valley). A blend of 67% Sangiovese, 23% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Syrah, this wine offers an intriguing assortment of raspberry jam, black licorice, vanilla and spice box. It's elegant, with a supple feel to the tangy fruit flavors backed by a firm squeeze of tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** $34

88 Burnt Bridge 2012 Blend X Les Collines Vineyard (Walla Walla Valley). A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Merlot with the balance Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, this wine offers aromas of coffee, cherry and herbs. It's full bodied with sweet cranberry flavors backed by gritty tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $32

88 Charles & Charles 2013 Post No. 35 Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah (Columbia Valley). This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (68%) and Syrah offers aromas of blue fruit, smoked meat, tire rubber and herbs. It's sweet and flavorful with abundant plum notes. ***Best Buy***. —S.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $12

88 Columbia Crest 2012 Grand Estates Gold Limited Release Red (Columbia Valley). This blend of Cabernet Franc (52%) along with Syrah (38%), Cabernet Sauvignon (8%) and 2% Merlot saw just a smidgeon (10%) of new oak. Notes of dried herbs, raspberries and dark chocolate partner with lithe fruit flavors backed by grainy tannins. ***Best Buy***. —S.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $12

88 Efesté 2011 Nana (Columbia Valley). A blend of Red Willow Merlot (61%) and Angela's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine offers savory aromas of herbs, nori and peanut shells. The palate shows good concentration to the sweet coffee and cherry flavors that display a supple feel and are backed by lightly chewy tannins. —S.S.
abv: NA **Price:** $44

88 Gård 2012 Don Isidoro Red Blend (Columbia Valley). This blend of 52% Syrah, 34% Cabernet Sauvignon and 14% Merlot offers strong notes of green olive, ham hock and herbs. It's loaded with mesquite flavors with slightly astringent tannins, narrowing toward the finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** $22

88 Gård 2012 Vaucluse (Columbia Valley). This blend of Syrah (72%), Grenache (21%) and Viognier brings vibrant aromas of green olive, smoked meat and orange peel, which don't entirely meld. It's tangy and flavorful with abundant mesquite notes on the finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $22

88 Golden Ridge 2010 Estate Red (Walla Walla Valley). With 62% Cabernet Sauvignon and 38% Merlot, this wine offers reserved notes of vanilla, cherry, herbs and dill. The fruit flavors are elegantly styled, dry, focused and sweet with fine-grained tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $29

88 Mark Ryan 2012 The Dissident (Columbia Valley). This blend holds 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, 12% Malbec, 11% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot, all from top Red Mountain vineyards. The wine shows notes of dried herbs, bay leaf, red fruit and dark plum. Considering the fruit sources, it's surprisingly reserved in its styling, very easy drinking with a light squeeze of tannins and a lingering finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $35

88 Nodland Cellars 2010 Bad Attitude (Walla Walla Valley). This blend offers notes of herbs, woodspice, black licorice and cherry. It's full of sweet black fruit flavors, with the alcohol riding high and providing some distraction. —S.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $15

88 Nodland Cellars 2010 Private Blend Red (Columbia Valley). This blend of six Bordeaux varieties is a little funky out of the gate with notes of woodspice, mushroom, cayenne, dry chocolate and cherry. The palate has mouthwatering cherry flavors that bring along some warmth on the finish. —S.S.
abv: 15% **Price:** $28

88 Northwest Cellars 2011 Madrigal (Columbia Valley). Quite light in color, this blend of Mourvèdre (62%), Grenache (24%) and Syrah offers pleasingly pure notes of herbs, white pepper, pine needles and cranberry. It's quite elegantly styled with a pillowy-soft feel and an appealing sense of purity. It will shine at the dinner table. —S.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $24

88 Patterson 2012 Syrah Sirah (Columbia Valley). This blend of 62% Syrah and 38% Petite Sirah conveys mocha, smoke and woodspice. It's full bodied in feel with coffee flavors backed by astringent tannins that provide a bit of distraction. —S.S.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** $32

88 Pondera 2011 Entwined (Columbia Valley). Merlot (57%) takes the lead on this lighter-colored wine that offers raspberries, cherries, herbs and woodspice. The fruit flavors are fresh and elegant, with lightly chalky tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $34

88 Pondera 2011 SVS Number One Conner Lee Vineyard (Columbia Valley). This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Malbec offers reserved aromas of green herbs, mineral and dusty chocolate. It's elegant and filled with juicy cherry flavors. —S.S.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $45

88 Two Vintners 2012 Legit (Columbia Valley). For this new offering from the winery, fruit comes from top vineyards Dineen, StoneTree, Klipsun, Pepper Bridge, Discovery and Kiona. It displays strong aromas of burnt coffee, woodspice and cherry. Flavors are medium bodied with blocky tannins and mouthwatering acids. —S.S.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** $30

88 Woodward Canyon 2012 Erratic (Walla Walla Valley). The second vintage of this wine produced, this blend of Mourvèdre (53%), Syrah (33%) and Grenache shows aromas of red and black fruit along with barrel spices. Still drinking young, it's filled with blackberry flavors that show good texture and richness. The wood seems a bit out front, giving a lightly grainy feel and dominating the notes on the finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** $66

IDAHO

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

89 Koenig Vineyards 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Snake River Valley). This wine offers notes of green herbs, buttery spices and high-toned cherry with tobacco accents. It's full bodied with sweet, palate-coating flavors, meaty notes and grainy tannins. —S.S.
abv: 15.7% **Price:** $22

87 3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2012 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Snake River Valley). This wine offers notes of Red Hots, coffee, vanilla and herbs. Cherry and blackberry flavors are sweet and viscous in feel backed by dry tannins. —S.S.
abv: 13.2% **Price:** $23

85 Ste. Chapelle 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Snake River Valley). Light in color for a Cabernet, this conveys black currant, fresh blackberries and coffee. It's a bit thin in the middle but remains pleasant and straightforward on the edges. —S.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $11

MERLOT

88 3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2011 Reserve Merlot (Snake River Valley). Lighter in color, this offers crushed herbs, berry and a distinctive mineral note. It drinks quite dry, medium bodied and filled with cranberry and currant flavors throughout. —S.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $23

86 3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2012 Reserve Merlot (Snake River Valley). Elegantly styled, this offers notes of herbs, red cherries, barnyard, mint and cedar. Sweet fruit flavors are backed by chalky tannins. —S.S.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $23

85 Ste. Chapelle 2012 Merlot (Snake River Valley). This 100% varietal brings a fruit-forward profile of candied red currants, cranberry and spice. It has fresh, medium-bodied flavors, with the concentration a bit wanting. —S.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $12

SYRAH

90 Cinder 2012 Syrah (Snake River Valley). The 5% Viognier co-fermentation shows itself first, with notes of flowers and orange peel. Next the

wine opens fully to reveal roasted meat, wet gravel and coffee. The palate is lighter in style and shows a pleasing sense of balance with tart acidity and a sultry feel. —S.S.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $27

87 **3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2012 Single Vineyard Syrah (Snake River Valley).** This moderately aromatic wine conveys Red Hots, baking spices and red fruit. It's on the lighter side of medium bodied, soft yet full of drawn-out blue-fruit flavors on the finish. —S.S.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $23

86 **3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2011 3 Horse Ranch Vineyard Syrah (Snake River Valley).** The aromas seem quite muddled with coffee, cranberry and currant fighting to get through. It's lighter in style with the variety seeming to get lost. —S.S.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** $23

RED BLENDS

89 **3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2012 Syrah-Mourvèdre (Snake River Valley).** This aromatic blend conveys mulberry, green olive, brown stems, peppery spices, dark flowers and manure. The fruit flavors are sweet, rich and pure while showing a pleasing sense of restraint, backed by a light grip of tannins. —S.S.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** $26

88 **Hat Ranch 2011 Hat Trick (Snake River Valley).** A blend of Merlot, Malbec and Syrah, it features notes of dark roasted coffee, char, vanilla and dark fruit. The fruit flavors are plump but lighter in style, with tart acids that keep it all together. —S.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $27

88 **Koenig Vineyards 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah (Snake River Valley).** This blend offers notes of nori, olive, cherry and tire rubber. The full-bodied flavors are sweet and palate-coating, with abundant savory notes and lightly grainy tannins. —S.S.
abv: 15.7% **Price:** $25

87 **Fujishin 2012 Amatino Red Blend (Snake River Valley).** Predominantly Syrah (80%) with Petite Sirah and Viognier, this wine conveys raspberries, cherries, flowers, black pepper and dark coffee. It's lighter in style with lip-smacking fruit and barrel flavors. —S.S.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** $22

86 **3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2011 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot (Snake River Valley).** Lighter in style, this offers notes of brambly blackberries, whole green pepper and dark coffee, with tart acids and dry, gritty tannins. —S.S.
abv: 13.3% **Price:** $26

86 **Ste. Chapelle 2012 Gem State Red (Snake River Valley).** A blend of Syrah (59%) and Merlot, this wine is downright fruity with red currant, rose hips and fruit leather. It's pleasant and easy drinking, though the tannins seem a bit unresolved. ***Best Buy***. —S.S.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $11

NEW YORK

PINOT NOIR

91 **Damiani 2012 Reserve Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes).** Spice, toast and savory dried herbs accent rich black cherry in this penetrating Pinot Noir. Dense on the palate and voluptuous in body, it's forward in fruit yet maintains a cool restraint of minerality and fine, penetrating tannins. It's a polished, memorable wine. ***Editors' Choice***. —A.I.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $47

90 **Damiani 2012 Reserve Lower Block Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes).** Lavish notes of toast, vanilla and spice abound on this robust Pinot Noir, but balance elegantly against bright red cherry and cranberry flavors. The finish is moderately long, marked by velvety tannins that frame the palate squarely. —A.I.
abv: 13.7% **Price:** $47

90 **Heron Hill 2012 Ingle Vineyard Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes).** There's a gorgeous floral lift to this silky-smooth wine. Red cherry and raspberry flavors are penetrating and ripe, but brisk with an invigorating mineral touch. Finely grained tannins linger on the finish. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $25

89 **Hosmer Winery 2013 Pinot Noir (Cayuga Lake).** Subtle notes of violet and bramble wood, along with a touch of granite minerality, add complexity to this elegant wine. It's silky and round on the palate, and concentrated in red cherry flavor, finishing with a zesty cranberry streak. —A.I.
abv: 13.1% **Price:** $18

88 **Atwater 2012 Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes).** Intense aromas of vanilla, smoked nuts and black cherry preserves seduce on the nose of this ripe, richly textured Pinot Noir. It's bold in fruit and oak tones, but penetrating tannins add gravitas to the finish. —A.I.
abv: 13% **Price:** $25

88 **Damiani 2011 Reserve Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes).** Tart black cherry and bramble give way to a cool granite minerality on the nose of this stately wine. Black fruit notes intensify on the palate, accumulating richness and ripeness, but the finish is a bit abrupt. —A.I.
abv: 13.4% **Price:** $47

88 **Silver Thread 2013 Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes).** While forward, plump red-cherry and strawberry notes are buoyant, a deep vein of granite and minerals adds gravitas and complexity to this elegant wine. Fresh cranberry acidity drives a swift finish. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $22

85 **Serenity 2011 Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes).** Juicy red cherry and raspberry flavors are layered with toast, cinnamon, vanilla and spice in this ornate yet approachable wine. It's sunny and plush on the midpalate, but grippy tannins mark a tight, brisk finish. —A.I.
abv: 12% **Price:** $22

CABERNET FRANC

90 **Damiani 2012 Barrel Select Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes).** A core of ripe, rich black cherry and cassis flavor pulsates throughout this powerfully concentrated Cabernet Franc. It's forward and fruity in style, yet integrated oak tones and bright cranberry acidity lend balance and polish. Fine-grained, yet penetrating tannins extend the finish. —A.I.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $43

88 **Heron Hill 2012 Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes).** Cassis and violet perfume seep into layers of bramble wood, smoke and toast on this aromatic wine. Medium bodied in style, it's ripe with blackberry jam notes highlighted by soft acidity and a delicate fringe of tannins. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $15

88 **Heron Hill 2012 Ingle Vineyard Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes).** While round and supple in style, this has a puckering note of sour plums that mingle amid ripe blackberry and cherry flavors. It's uniquely tart and rich, but nuanced with fine, layered tannins and just a touch of brine that lingers on the finish. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $25

88 **Swedish Hill 2012 Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes).** Deep streaks of granite and smoke accent tart red-currant flavor. Cranberry acidity is brisk and biting on the midpalate, but the finish is long, marked by a dust of spice and fine, lingering tannins. —A.I.
abv: 13.1% **Price:** $17

88 **Wölffer 2011 Caya Cabernet Franc (The Hamptons, Long Island).** Layers of smoke, vanilla and cardamom meander through this sexy, supple wine. Blackberry and cherry flavors penetrate the midpalate, highlighted by soft acidity and a touch of bramble wood on the finish. —A.I.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $35

87 **Millbrook 2013 Cabernet Franc (New York).** Bramble wood and savory herbs lend earthiness to this ripe, juicy wine. Fruit-forward in style, the palate bursts with black currants and cherry flavors. Soft acidity and a whisper of tannins on the finish keep the mouthfeel plush. —A.I.
abv: 13% **Price:** $20

87 **Serenity 2012 Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes).** Tawny in color and wafting of potpourri and fallen leaves, this raspberry-inflected wine is already starting to show its maturity. Briskly concentrated and light on its feet, it makes an elegant sip to enjoy now before it loses its delicate, perfumed charms. —A.I.
abv: 12% **Price:** $20

87 **Sheldrake Point 2012 Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes).** Ripe red cherry and plum flavors are plump and plush in this rich, full-bodied wine. Soft acidity adds to its easy feel, but grippy, fine-grained tannins help to rein in the finish. —A.I.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $18

86 **Domaine LeSeurre 2012 Barrel Select Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes).** While ripe bramble wood and herb tones are elegant, there's a slightly candied nature to the red cherry and berry flavors in this light-bodied Cabernet Franc. It's brisk, with a zesty, spry finish. —A.I.
abv: 12% **Price:** $27

86 **Hosmer Winery 2013 Cabernet Franc (Cayuga Lake).** While subdued on the nose, this offers tart red cherry and currant flavors that are refreshing and crisp on the palate. The wine is not deeply concentrated or complex, but its elegant frame and vitality are attractive. —A.I.
abv: 12.6% **Price:** $18

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

88 **Chateau Lafayette Reneau 2012 Owner's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Finger Lakes).** Smoked nuts and earth tones lend savoriness to ripe black-cherry and blackberry flavors. Subtle spice and licorice mark the midpalate, leading to a bold, grippy finish. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $40

87 **Chateau Lafayette Reneau 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Finger Lakes).** Swathes of fresh tarragon lend a green, herbal tone to cassis and black plum flavors in this pretty wine. Penetrating, grippy tannins are jolting on the finish, underlining a tight, brisk finish. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $25

87 **Damiani 2012 Barrel Select Cabernet Sauvignon (Finger Lakes).** Ripe, rich cassis and blackberry flavors are shaded with savory touches of soy sauce and clay in this bold, lushly textured wine. Soft acidity makes this wine plush and plump on the palate, but its fruity exuberance is quite pleasant. —A.I.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $45

87 **Wölffer 2011 Cassango Cabernet Sauvignon (Long Island).** Prominent streaks of spice, toast and smoke persist amidst tart black cherry and cassis flavors in this full-bodied wine. Pomegranate acidity is bracing on the midpalate, accentuating a slightly brusque finish. —A.I.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $40

MERLOT

88 **Sherwood House Vineyards 2010 Merlot (North Fork of Long Island).** There's a restraint to tart blackberry and plum flavors in this smart, streamlined Merlot, with 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Petit Verdot and 7% Cabernet Franc. Delicate notes of spice and toast are integrated on the palate and brisk acidity showcases the wine's pristine, crisp fruit profile. —A.I.
abv: 13% **Price:** $30

86 **Goose Watch 2012 Merlot (Finger Lakes).** Layers of vanilla, spice and toast persist throughout this richly textured wine. Sunny raspberry and cherry flavors are pleasant, but peek through a bit shyly on the palate. It's an oaky wine, but supple and seductive with a fringe of finely grained, persistent tannins. —A.I.
abv: 13% **Price:** $18

85 **Serenity 2012 Merlot (Finger Lakes).** There's a ruddy ripeness to red raspberry and cherry flavors in this delicately framed Merlot. It's crisp with acidity and enticingly spiced, but finishes abruptly. —A.I.
abv: 12% **Price:** $28

RED BLENDS

90 **Damiani 2012 Meritage (Finger Lakes).** Tangy black cherry and cassis flavors are punchy and penetrating in this Bordeaux-style blend (with an emphasis on Cabernet Sauvignon). It's richly, densely textured, but uplifted by a strike of cranberry acidity and granite. It's a polished wine with a long, meandering finish. —A.I.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** $27

90 **Heron Hill 2012 The Chosen Spot Ingle Vineyard (Finger Lakes).** Swathes of tarragon and lavender add lift to this stately Bordeaux-style blend. The palate is bright with sweet-tart black plum flavor, but supple and round, showing well-integrated oak notes and a fine layer of tannins on the finish. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $40

90 **Heron Hill 2011 Eclipse (New York).** Deftly calibrating sultry black fruit against savory earth tones, this blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc offers refinement. Toast, smoke and bramble integrate amid black plum and cherry flavors. The finish is powerful and persistent, fringed with finely grained tannins. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** $18

89 **Bellangelo 2012 Meritage (Seneca Lake).** Initially dusty mineral tones blow off to reveal an aromatic bouquet full of fresh lilacs and cassis. Tart blackberry and cherry flavors on the palate are bristling and spry, accented by touch of sage and delicate tannins on the finish. —A.I.
abv: 12.8% **Price:** $25

89 **Swedish Hill 2012 Cabernet Franc-Lemberger (Finger Lakes).** Tart black plum and cherry are accented by savory tones of bramble wood, toast and nuts in this blend that showcases both Cabernet Franc and Lemberger. It's refreshingly brisk and mineral, finishing spry with a soft touch of tannins. —A.I.
abv: 12.9% **Price:** $16

89 **Swedish Hill 2012 Optimus (Finger Lakes).** Threads of dark char, nuts and spice meander throughout this rich, deeply concentrated Bordeaux-style blend. Plump black cherry and cassis flavors are luscious on the palate, but invigorated by a bright flash of acidity and spice on the finish. —A.I.
abv: 13% **Price:** $25

88 **Macari 2010 Dos Aguas (North Fork of Long Island).** Rich, lusciously concentrated black plum and cherry flavors are accented with spice and smoke in this bold, Merlot-heavy blend. Framed with fine, chalky tannins, it's supple and silky in mouthfeel with a moderately long finish. —A.I.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** $30

88 **Serenity 2012 Mirth (Finger Lakes).** Equal proportions of Cabernet Franc and Merlot yield this penetrating sour-cherry palate touched with nuts, smoke, bramble and herb. It's refreshingly light bodied, marked by a crush of cranberry acidity and finely grained tannins. —A.I.
abv: 12% **Price:** $24

88 **Wölffer 2011 Fatalis Fatum (Long Island).** While toast and spice are prominent on the nose, oak notes integrate elegantly on the palate of this plush, full-bodied Bordeaux-style blend. It's juicy and fruit forward, with soft, chalky tannins showcasing sultry, ripe cassis and blackberry flavors. —A.I.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** $35

86 **Keuka Spring 2013 Epic Reserve (New York).** Violet florals and ripe blackberry perfume are alluring on this Merlot-Cabernet blend. The palate is particularly plump with luscious, slightly confected, black-cherry preserve flavor, but tightened on the finish by a ruffle of grippy tannins. —A.I.
abv: 12.8% **Price:** $25

86 **Pumphouse 2011 Red (North Fork of Long Island).** Ripe, brambly notes accentuate luscious blackberry and cassis flavors in this fleshy, full-bodied red blend. It's a straightforward wine with baby-soft tannins underlining its forward, fruity style. ***Best Buy***. —A.I.
abv: 13% **Price:** $11

SPIRITS

Give it a rest: Reposado Tequila reviews

Although *blanco* Tequilas may line the bar at Mexican restaurants, if you're seeking the ultimate Tequila cocktail, head for the *reposado*.

Reposado (meaning rested) Tequilas—aged in oak barrels from two months to one year—offer a balanced blend of sprightly pepper and citrus notes tempered by mellow, toasty vanilla.

Reposado Tequila is be making a strong showing on cocktail menus. This makes sense: Where *añejo* (aged) is often too expensive to mix and blanco too brash, the honeyed tones of reposado Tequila lend affordable finesse to mixed drinks, from classic margaritas and palomas to newer libations.

Where *añejo* (aged) is often too expensive to mix and blanco too brash, the honeyed tones of reposado Tequila lend affordable finesse to mixed drinks.

Since they are aged in barrels (including some that previously held whiskey), it shouldn't be surprising that many compare reposado Tequila to whiskey. So perhaps it was only a matter of time before some clever mixologist adapted a classic whiskey cocktail to feature reposado. Indeed, at New York newcomer Tijuana Picnic, bartender Jim Kearns has created what he calls "a Mexi-Manhattan."

The "Mi Hermano," starts with 1½ ounces of reposado Tequila and an ounce of sweet vermouth—similar to a Manhattan. But then Kearns bitters it up with ¾ ounce of Averna (an Italian *amaro*), plus two dashes each of Angostura bitters and Bittermens Xocolatl Mole Bitters. The cocktail is then shaken and strained into a coupe glass spritzed with Fernet-Branca. The end result is complex and surprisingly food-friendly, just right alongside a soft taco filled with skirt steak.

Additionally, many reposados are suitable as sipping Tequilas. For example, Herradura's line of cask-finished Tequilas offer complexity worth savoring, while Tapatio's new expression has intriguingly savory, almost meaty flavors that seem a shame to hide beneath fruit juices.

Cheers!

—Kara Newman

97 Tequila Herradura Colección de la Casa Reserva 2014 Scotch Cask Finish Reposado Tequila (Mexico; Brown-Forman Beverages, Louisville, KY). The newest addition to Herradura's stunning collection of cask-finished Tequilas nods to Scotland. It smells like a dessert wine, showing stone fruit, Sherry and honey. Those flavors are echoed on the palate, a lingering, smoky wisp that evokes peaty Islay Scotch. It's smooth and sips well. Aged for 11 months, then transferred to single-malt Scotch casks from the Highland and Islay regions for three additional months of aging.
abv: 40% **Price:** $90

95 Siete Leguas Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Gemini Spirits & Wine, Chicago, IL). Delicate and balanced, this Tequila is pale straw in the glass, with hardly any color. The nose and palate seem to trade back and forth between jabs of jalapeño pepper and smoothing vanilla-honey sweetness, even into the elongated fade. Sip or mix.
abv: 40% **Price:** $43

95 Tequila Herradura Colección de la Casa Reserva 2013 Cognac Cask Finish Reposado Tequila (Mexico; Brown-Forman Beverages, Louisville, KY). Fruity and bright, this soft, Cognac cask-finished Tequila evokes honey and butterscotch, with just enough jalapeño backbone to remind that this is an agave spirit. The lovely finish shows honeysuckle and a mouthwatering saline touch. Aged for 11 months, then transferred to former Cognac casks for three additional months of aging.
abv: 40% **Price:** $90

94 Casa Noble Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Constellation Brands, Chicago, IL). Layering sweetness and spice, this bold honey-hued spirit fills the nose and mouth with brown sugar and butterscotch. Clove, jalapeño and black pepper seem to grow more present with every sip.
abv: 40% **Price:** $60

94 Don Ramon Tequila Reposado (Mexico; ER Distributors, San Antonio, TX). A warm honey aroma wafts from this smooth and gentle Tequila. Well-integrated flavors of honey and bright jalapeño pepper finish with a prickle of ginger. Recommended for cocktails or straight-up sipping.
abv: 40% **Price:** $36

94 Partida Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Partida Tequila, San Francisco, CA). Soft, light and crisp, this six-month-aged reposado is bright in the glass and offers mild honey, pear and white flower scents. It's soft and fruity on the palate, accented by ginger and white pepper. Though an easy sipper, this Tequila would elevate margaritas too.
abv: 40% **Price:** $47

93 IXA Organic Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Greenbar Craft Distillery, Los Angeles, CA). Bright gold in the glass, this organic Tequila shows rounded notes of vanilla and buttery brioche, enlivened by a gentle white-floral touch and a sprinkling of baking spices. Squeeze some organic grapefruit juice and start making all-organic palomas.
abv: 40% **Price:** $47

93 Lunazul Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Heaven Hill, Bardstown, KY). Spicy and herbaceous aromas, plus a touch of coconut lead into this Tequila. The palate echoes that coconut, plus vanilla and just enough baking spice heat to provide depth and complexity. ***Best Buy.***
abv: 40% **Price:** $21

93 Pueblo Viejo Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Gemini Spirits & Wine, Chicago, IL). Opening with zesty fresh oregano and sun-dried tomato aromas, this light-straw Tequila skews a bit sweeter on the palate. Vanilla and coconut flavors tighten to a savory finish, showing dried herbs and black pepper. Aged nine months. ***Best Buy.***
abv: 40% **Price:** $23

93 Tapatio Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Domaine Charbay Distillers, Ukiah, CA). For full review see page 13.
abv: 40% **Price:** $44/1 L

92 Casamigos Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Sidney Frank Importing, New Rochelle, NY). Sip or mix this reposado, which is backed by actor George Clooney. Look for pleasing butterscotch and maple sugar, with just enough spice around the edges to keep things interesting. Finishes smooth, with a cinnamon tingle.
abv: 40% **Price:** $50

92 Maestro Dobel Tequila Reposado (Mexico; Proximo Spirits, Jersey City, NJ). Perhaps one of the most fruit-forward Tequilas around, this reposado is scented with strawberries and raspberries. Agave sweetness leads on the palate, bringing pepper, ginger and a last lick of butterscotch. Aged six months.
abv: 40% **Price:** $45

BEER

Spring for seasonally appropriate lagers

Although we haven't gotten to the truly hot months yet, May is a great time to take a look at some of the beer styles you should get to know ahead of all of the upcoming season's outdoor entertaining. Although personal preferences vary, the one beer style that's sure to quench your thirst on those hot days at the park, the barbecue or the poolside bash is lager.

Known for being crisper, cleaner and more refreshing than ales, lagers shouldn't be misinterpreted as being boring or watery. While they are lighter in body and alcohol than their ale brethren, and are moderate to high in carbonation, they still offer masterfully balanced flavors and subtle complexities that should be appreciated.

Known for being crisper, cleaner and more refreshing than ales, lagers shouldn't be misinterpreted as being boring or watery.

What makes lagers such an excellent choice for warm weather as opposed to ales? The main difference is that ales are brewed with top-fermenting yeast while lagers are brewed with bottom-fermenting yeast. Lager yeasts are inherently more fragile than ale yeasts, with a lower alcohol tolerance, and undergo fermentation at lower temperatures. This leads to a slower, longer fermentation and storage period (hence the name lager, from the German *lagern*, meaning "to store").

Lagers typically have fewer esters and aromas than ales and greater clarity. They're full-bodied beers with a mellow palate that's crisp in character and less fruity.

Lagers can also range in style and intensity, from crisp Pilseners (also known as Pilsner, or Pils for short) to robust Vienna or Amber lagers or even bold doppelbocks. No matter how intense the profile, they are always considered to be clean, well-balanced selections.

Prost! —Lauren Buzzeo

95 Ayinger Celebrator Doppelbock (Doppelbock; Brauerei Aying, Germany). Celebrator is an iconic doppelbock, regularly earning awards and accolades from competitions and journalists. It pours a dark mahogany color with flecks of rich amber when held up to the light. The bouquet immediately entices with seductive notes of toffee, caramel, toasted cinnamon-raisin bread, dried plum and fig, all laced with threads of molasses and sweet smoke. The mouth is lush and velvety, and many of the aromatic elements become part of the flavor profile without finishing cloyingly sweet. Notes of coffee and cocoa linger through the close, and the alcohol is completely in balance with all of the other elements. Merchant du Vin.
abv: 6.7% **Price:** $4/330 ml

95 Left Hand Polestar Pilsner (German-style Pilsener; Left Hand Brewing Co., CO). This is a stunning beer, with just about everything you'd look for and expect from a German-style Pilsener. It's a clear, golden-yellow color with fine bubbles dancing up toward the fluffy white head. The bouquet is appropriately soft and nuanced, with delicate hints of fresh grain, bread, citrusy hops and grass. Those same notes follow through on the palate, but the flavors are a bit more intense, supporting the smooth mouthfeel and spicy hop-infused finish. Medium weight and well-balanced. The dry finish is softly astringent, with a slightly grainy texture.
abv: 5.5% **Price:** $10/12 oz 6 pack

90 Full Sail Cascade Pilsner (German-style Pilsener; Full Sail Brewing Company, OR). After the success of Full Sail's 26th anniversary selection, the brewery added the Cascade Pilsner recipe to their year-round lineup. A Northwest take on a European classic, it pours a beautiful bright-gold color, with a chunky white head that boasts excellent retention and leaves serious lacing behind with each sip. The hop-derived aromas of citrus and pine are forward and intense, with supporting notes of pale malt and cereal grain. The mouthfeel is medium-bodied but full of flavor, with high carbonation and a harmonious balance between the crisp lager core and the sticky hop characteristics. Herbal tones of meadow, yellow flower and soft pepper grace the finish.
abv: 6% **Price:** $8/12 oz 6 pack





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DOWN & OUT IN BURGUNDY

A bicycle ride through wine country falls flat—in the best possible way.

BY JEFF JENSSEN

I like to think I *politely* sighed and simply muttered with great poise, "*Cinq crevaisons*," as I heard that telltale pop and hiss of my bicycle tire going flat. But I'm sure I said something much, much worse than "five flat tires."

Five flats in a year are almost unthinkable for most regular cyclists. This was my fifth in *one day*.

My companion, Mike, and I had already gone through our spare tubes and four patch kits, so our only choice was to walk our bikes to the nearest town and find a way back to our hotel in Beaune.

Stranded midway between Meursault and Puligny-Montrachet, Mike and I made our defeated pedal-free march down the winding road.

Earlier that morning, after a breakfast of coffee and baguette, we headed south from Beaune, traveling along small back roads. We passed through Pommard and Volnay before the first flat.

Changing a tube is much easier than patching one, so we made quick work of the first two flats. Despite the setbacks, we stopped to taste wine wherever possible, including a chance meeting with the Comtesse de Meursault at her cousin's winery in Auxey-Duresses.

We followed her on bicycle to visit her enormous chateau and buy a couple of bottles, so we had done Meursault in style. And then we were off, onward to Puligny, home to some of the finest white wines in the world.

Our plan was to have lunch at Olivier Leflaive's restaurant and tasting room there, but thanks to the flats, we had missed lunchtime service. The sommelier sympathized with our airless plight and sent us off with some open bottles, a slice of pâté and a hunk of bread for our hike.

After an hour's walk, we stopped to taste at Caveau de Puligny-Montrachet. But something wasn't right. The pours were extremely small, and the gent behind the bar was reluctant to open anything beyond an inexpensive *appellation village*.

We realized quickly that he assumed two cyclists would not be purchasing wine to go, so Mike tottered outside on his bike shoes, returned with a credit card-filled Ziploc and said, *"Monsieur, acceptez-vous les cartes de crédit?"*

We explained our circumstances, adding we would need a van big enough for us, our bicycles and all the wine we were planning to buy.

As bottles were opened and the wine flowed freely, our heroes pulled up: Three hunters packed into an army-green Land Rover with a wild boar draped across the hood. They climbed out and ran inside, ordering a bottle of Crémant de Bourgogne to celebrate. They offered us a glass, and after a toast, we reciprocated and bought them another bottle.

What followed: Two more bottles, three hours of lively hunting tales and laughter, four cases of wine that we would take back to America, a new set of friends and a ride back to our hotel in Beaune in the coolest truck on the road (did I mention the boar?).

Mike and I agreed: We did Puligny-Montrachet in style too, all thanks to those freakish five flats.

ILLUSTRATION: JULIA LEA



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